

THE
SAINTS

ANCHOR-HOLD,
IN ALL
Storms and Tempests.

Preached in Sundry
SERMONS;
And Published for the Support and
Comfort of God's People, in all
Times of Tryal.

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Stephens Colemans-street, London; and Pa-
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Heb. 6. 18. *Lay hold upon the Hope set before us,*
19. *which Hope we have, as an Anchor of*
the Soul, both sure and stedfast, and
which extreth into that within the vail.
20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entred,*
even Jesus, made an High-Priest for
ever, after the order of Melchisadech.

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STAIN

And for Honor

Stones and Temples
Traced in Society

STERN



And Public

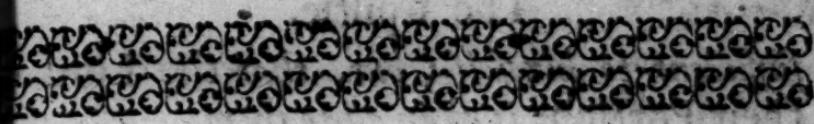
By W. B. D. ...

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THE
PREFACE.

TO

The Christian Reader.

A S the whole Creation hath groaned ever since its original subjection unto Vanity, earnestly expecting the manifestation of the Sons of God: So more especially in these latter days the travailing increased, as presages of its approaching Deliverance. The Vanity of it hath always been great, but the Experimental Discoveries thereof never more than now. In this case it is the Wisdom of a Christian to secure to himself an interest in a Portion as sufficient and permanent as Jehovah that never changeth: A greater than which cannot be procured: This may, and a less will never satisfy; By this men live indeed, and in this is the life of a Christian. That the Lord's Portion are his People, addeth nothing to him that is All-

The Epistle.

sufficient to himself; but, that the Lord is their Portion, is all in all to them. And this is the foundation of their Hope and Comfort. For here we are all Embarked in a Vessel, sometimes caught with Winds, sometimes covered with Waves, and should soon be at our wits end, but for this sure and stedfast Anchor, which entrencheth into that within the Vail.

Now that Portion, and this Hope grounded on it, are the Churches, and a Christian's support in the midst of their Lamentations: For the Church at this time was driven from Jerusalem, Zion, Temple, Temple-Ordinances, and native Place of residence, greatly afflicted and tossed with Tempests. This is only remaining, that she hath God for her Portion, and Hope for her Anchor, never to be taken from her. And both these are the Subject of the ensuing Discourse, seasonable and suitable at all times, especially in these last moments of the last Days, in which God is shaking Heaven, Earth, and Sea, in order to the appearance of the Desire of all Nations.

As touching the Author of this Treatise (whose heart the Text was written by the finger of God, before the Discourse was penned by his own hand) his Piety, Learning, Gravity, Experience, Judgment, do not more commend him to all that know him, than this Word

The Epistle.

of his may commend it self to them that read
: And the Consideration of the two Hinges
on which the Text turneth.
Valde sunt cognata Faith and Hope, their near
Sorores, Fides & Spes Cognation, Concomitance,
Dr. Par. in Heb. 6. Usefulness, Necessity, Pow-
er, Comfort, the first exciting the second,
the one commensurate with the other, is e-
nough to procure from thee the Expence of
a little time, to see and weigh what is here
spoken of these most necessary Helps to Eternal
Happiness, which will never relinquish the
Believer, till they have resigned him up to the
glorious Vision and Fruition of the Objects be-
lieved in, and hoped for, there leaving the Soul
to the everlasting Exercise of never fail-
ing Love to God and the Saints in Glory.
That this holy Faith and Hope in God,
and one to another, may daily Flourish, and
be confirmed in the Hearts and Lives of all
the Saints on Earth, till they enter upon
their purchased Possession (which is the end of
their Faith and Hope, to the Praise of the Glo-
ry of God) in Glory, is the hearty desire and
Prayer of

Thy Fellow-Brethren in
this Faith and Hope,

W. H.

J. C.



(thee,
C Hear up, my Soul, tho' Troubles here perplex
 And Widow'd Sorrows discompose thy Breast:
 What tho' Infernal Fiends below do vex thee?

The time is coming thou shalt live at rest!
 Cease Mourning then, thou widow'd Soul, and trust
 Thy Faith shall Bloom and Blossom 'mong the Just
 What, tho' dark Clouds encompass thee all round,
 And thou art Hoodwink'd in this Vale of Fears,
 Jesus, sweet Jesus, shall these Mists confound,

And in his Bosome Bottle all thy Tears:
 Fear not then Death, that universal Guest,
 He'll nothing do, but ope the door to Rest.

S Ee, see, the Soul is risen from the Dead,
 And *Hope* receives her long, long wisht-for rest
 Oh! the transcendent Joys which Crown her Head

And God-like Comfort that Consols her Breast
 She who was once below, to Sin a Slave,
 Tramples with Triumph now, o'er Death & Grave
 But, ah! her Saviour's Merits led the way;

And all the Glories which he gain'd below,
 She hangs as Trophies on the Cross, that they
 Th' immatchless Love of Jesus Christ may show
 Wing'd with immortal Faith, her Soul sets Sail,
 To Heav'n it flies, and Anchors in the Vail! 25.

The Saints

ANCHOR-HOLD.

Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.*

THis Book is, according to the Judgment of a Godly, Learned * Writer, an Abridgment of all *Jeremie's* Sermons, from the 13th year of *Josias*, unto the 4th. of *Joakim*; * *Mr. Broughton*. and that Book which God Commanded *Jeremy* to Write, and to cause *Baruch* to Read it publicly. upon the day of a Fast, kept in the Ninth Month of the Fifth year of *Jehojakim*, See the story at large which afterward *Jehudi* read unto the King, sitting by a Fire, in *in Jer. 36*. his Winter House, who was so far from Repenting, that, when he had Read three or four Leaves of it, he cut it with a Penknife, and cast it into the Fire, till all was consumed, and rejected the Intercession of

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some of his Princes, that he would not burn it, and he Commanded to lay hold on *Jeremy* and *Baruch*: But God hid them. Whereupon the Lord Commanded *Jeremy* to Write the Book again, with Additions, which the same Writer thinks, was this Chapter, which consisteth of a threefold Alphabet in the Hebrew. The Prophet, having discharged his Offices, in labouring to convince the Jews of their Sins, and to bring them to Repentance, when he found not the success he desired, he falls to Lamenting and Weeping, for their Pride and Obstinacy in Sin, and teacheth them also how to lament their own Misery in Captivity; and, because there was among them a Basket of good Figs, he teacheth them how to Exercise Faith and Hope in the midst of their Sorrows: Among other passages, my Text hath a tendency thereunto, which admits a double Consideration; 1. As a part of a Lamentation. 2. As an Expression of a free Spirit. Accordingly I shall handle it, First, as a part of a Lamentation. In Verse 17, 18. you may see their deep dejection and despondency; *I said my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.* In Verse 19, 20, 21. you may see how from the good fruit of their Affliction, in humbling them, they gather Hope. In Verse 22, 23. they can see Mercy in God towards them in their Affliction. In my Text, they are as Men that find Rest, after their Dangers and Tossings at Sea, by casting Anchor upon firm Ground, in a

safe

safe Harbour. The Doctrinal note I collect from the Words so considered, is this:

Doct. Though it may be the case of True Believers to be greatly dejected for a time, yet, even then, God doth support their Spirits, and quicken their Faith and Hope in him. To clear this point, we must prove two things. 1. That it may be the case of True Believers, to be greatly dejected, for a time. This may be abundantly confirmed, both by the Scriptures in the Examples of *Job, David, Hezekiah, Asaph, Heman*, and of *Christ* himself, in the Gardens, and on the Cross, and by reasons of sundry sorts.

R. 1. From God himself, sometimes withholding the Light of his Countenance from True Believers, Then it is with them, as it is with the Earth, which would be covered with Darkness, Coldness, and Deadness, if the Light and Influence of the Sun were withdrawn from it. He is the God of all Comfort, 2 Cor. 1. 3. without him no true Comfort can be had. Sometimes he Creates Darkness in the Soul; then it is filled with Fear, and Amazement, and Disquietment. And thus he doth, for Holy and Good Ends. 1. To confirm Believers to Christ, as Members to their Head, *Rom. 8. 29.* 2. To inform them, where their life is hid, viz. with Christ, in God, *Col. 3. 3.* and that Christ, the last Adam, is made a quickning Spirit. 1 Cor. 15. 45. that thereby he may quicken his People in God, who quickneth the

dead, when themselves had not only a Sentence of Death, in their Bodies, as *Paul* had, *2 Cor.* 1. 9. but also a Sense of Death in their Souls, as *Heman* had, *Psal.* 88. 5. To Reform them. Partly, for Correction of their Unthankfulness for former Comforts received from him, and for their not Improving them unto the ends for which he gave them. As a father, when he seeth his Child doth but Play with the Candle, which he afforded him to Work by, takes it from him, takes it from him, and leaves him in the Dark. Partly, for prevention of Spiritual Pride. *2 Cor.* 12. 7. Of Spiritual Wantonness, and self Confidence, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. Of Carnal Security, *Cant.* 5. 6. and sundry other Distempers.

R. 2. From Satan, that Envious one, who, as in the beginning sought to cast *Adam* out of Paradise, and to bereave him of his Happiness in Communion with God, so now, finding Believers in the Kingdom of Grace, which consists in Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit, when he cannot deprive them of their Righteousness, will endeavour to disturb their Peace, and damp their Joy; knowing, that when they perform Duties uncomfortably, they do them weakly, and but by halves. To this end: 1. He strives to hide from them those Promises that might Comfort them, when they have most need and use of them, and he sometimes prevails herein, *Heb.* 12. 5. 2. He suggests any Word that may terrify them,
and

in all Storms and Tempests.

and presents to their Memory and thoughts former Sins, to amaze them. 3. He presents all things unto them in false Glasses; the Comforts of God, in a diminishing Glass, that God may seem to them less Merciful, less Gracious than he is, and the Promises of God less Free, less General than they are; that all the Consolations of God may seem small things to them, *Job. 15. 11.* but he presents to them their Sins in a Multiplying Glass, that they may seem more, and greater than they are; their Sins, as impardonable; their Miseries, as intollerable, incurable; their State as desperate. 4. He useth his Instruments to deal with them, as the Philistines did with *Isaac*, whose Wells they stopped up, to make unprofitable to them Wells of Salvation, from whence Believers might draw Waters of Consolation. Thus he used *Saul* to banish *David* from the ordinances, and wicked Men to insult and reproach him; saying, *Where is now thy God? Psal. 42. 3.* So others, to twit them with their Religion, when they are in distress, saying, *Where are now your Prayers, your Hearing, Reading, Meditating, Conferring, your Conscientious and Exact Walking, your Confidence in God? You live more dejectedly than others, and are as fearful, as others, to dye.* Thus they thrust, as it were, Swords and Daggers into their Bones, to kill their Comforts, as *David* there complained, Verse 20,

R. 3. From themselves : 1. Sin presseth down their Spirits, and hinders their cheerful Progress in a Christian Course, as Weight doth Runners in a Race, *Heb. 12. 1.* Sorrow in the heart brings it down, especially, when guilt of Sin is added to it. When the shoulder is out of Joynt, it cannot bear its own pain, much less other Burthens. So it is with the Soul, a wounded Spirit who can bear? *Prov. 18. 14* 2. Their Spirit sometimes suffers from their Bodies, by sympathy : as in Melancholly, which so darkens their Imagination, that every thing seems dark to them, and so sowers their Spirits, that every thing seems bitter to them, and so fills them with fears and suspicions, that every thing affrights them. 3. Sometimes passion so prevaileth in them, that the higher faculties of the Soul are subjected to the affections, which so bemist the understanding that it cannot Judge of things according to right reason : The Conscience becomes suspensive, and wavering, and the memory, like a leaking Vessel, lets the Grounds of Comfort run out, and be forgotten : 4. Sometimes spiritual Gifts of Grace are not exercised, but as the Body grows listless when some dull humour seizeth, Faith is oppressed by Unbelief, Hope with Fears ; they do not put forth themselves to wrestle with God, and stir up themselves to take hold on him, but yield unto every Temptation and Discouragement. Thus you see, that it may be the case

case of Believers to be greatly Dejected, for a time.

The second thing to be cleared, is; That though it be thus with True Believers for a time; yet then God will do two things for them.

1. He will secretly support them, so that they may say as *Paul* did, in *2 Cor.* 4. 8, 9, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, not destroyed.* God dealt with the Basket of good Figs, in Captivity, as *Christ* did with *Peter*, who first let him see his own Weakness, in the Water, then quickned him to cry unto him for help, and then stretched forth his hand and withheld him. *Mat.* 14. 30, 31. So the Lord left the Church so far that they complained, my hope is perished from the Lord, yet speedily raised them up in sight of his mercy to Trust and hope in him. In like manner, he supports Believers.

R. 1. From God's unchangeableness in his Love; and Unweariedness in doing them good. *Isa.* 64. 5. and 40. 27, 28, 29, 31.

R. 2. From God's Faithfulness in his Covenant and Promises, *Isa.* 54. 8, 9. *Psal.* 37. 24. *Heb.* 13. 5. 2. He will quicken their Faith, to look unto himself for Relief and Comfort, in such times, *2 Chron.* 20. 12. *Psal.* 121. 1, 2. *Jon.* 2, 2, 4. for these Reasons:

R. 1. From the efficacy of the Spirit of Faith in the n. As the Needle in the Compass, being touched with the Load stone, though it may be moved and shaken this way and that, for a time, yet resteth not till it point to the North; so the Soul, being touched by the Spirit of Grace, though it may be forced, by Temptation, from its bent, for a time, yet it hath no rest, till it stand Godward. They may by Temptations be as Sheep driven from Mountain to Mountain, and forget their resting place, *Jer. 50. 6.* But the Spirit of Faith in them will cause them to return unto God, and to say, as *David Psal. 116. 7.* *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul.* Believers are like *Noah's Dove*, that finding no rest for the Soles of its Feet, in the Deluge, returned unto the Ark. Other men will, like the Raven, be soon satisfied with other things.

R. 2. From the suitable Operation of God's Spirit in them unto the end of God's afflicting them. God's end, in afflicting his Children, is to drive them from all other things unto himself. For he corrects them for their good, *Heb. 12. 10.* And it's good for them to draw near to God, *Psal. 73. 28.* When afflictions work us thereunto, it is from the Spirits sanctifying operation in them. For, 1. Afflictions cannot work thus of themselves, but rather set men further off from God by discontentment with his Providence, because it crosseth their carnal Affections. And, 2. The Soul it self is

In all Storms and Tempests.

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pt to misgivings, in such cases, and to have
ard thoughts of God. And, 3. Satan takes
uch occasions to breed and increase a distance
nd division between the Soul and God.
Therefore it must be from the sanctifying ope-
ration of God's Spirit in them and with them,
when they work this good, *Rom. 8. 28.*

Use 1. For Instruction. 1. Here we may
see the difference between Believers and others,
in their dejected condition. 1. Believers have
the Spirit of Faith in them, whereby the soul,
though it be over-born by Passion and Tem-
ptation, for a time, yet it will work it self into
freedom again, as oyl will be uppermost. The
Spirit, as a Spring, will be cleansing it self
more and more, from that mudd that is in it.
But the heart of Unbelievers is like a standing
Pool, where that which is cast into it rests.
They are like the Sea, where trouble and un-
quietness are in their proper place, *Isa. 57. 20.*
True Rest and Peace are for ever separated
from Sin in any Soul, till the breach between
God and the Soul be made up by Faith in
Christ. 2. Believers have an interest in God,
and he in them, through Jesus Christ. Hence
they are kept, as in a Garrison, by his mighty
Power, through Faith, unto salvation *1 Pet. 1.*
5. through the intercession of Christ, *Luk. 22.*
3. by the Spirit of Christ dwelling with them,
and who shall be in them and abide with them
for ever: so that they shall not be left Com-
fortless. *John 14. 16, 17, 18.* Hereupon Paul
trium-

triumphed, in *Rom. 8. 35, &c.* Where he puts the question about persons, and answers about things, neither shall separate them from the Love, which either Christ bears to them, or they to Christ. Sin cannot separate them from Christ's love to them, because he hath more than conquered it, by his own power. Tribulation cannot separate Believers from the Love they bear to Christ, because they shall more than conquer it, by the power of Christ, it is not our Hold of God and Christ, but God's and Christ's hold of us that keeps us to him. The root bears us up, not we the root. *Rom. 11. 18.* This *Asaph* acknowledged unto God, when his feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipt; saying, *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand, Ps. 73. 2, 23.* But unbelievers are without Christ, and without God in the World. *Eph. 2. 12.* Therefore when their Creature comforts fail them, they are as a ship tossed in the Sea without a Pylot, and without an Anchor, which soon is bulged upon Rocks, or falleth upon Quick-sands, having no God to guide or support them.

2. Hence we may learn how to carry ourselves towards afflicted, dejected Christians. Judge mercifully and wisely of poor Weaklings. *Psal. 41. 1.* Men are apt, through want of Wisdom and Love, to mis-apprehend the causes of their Dejectedness. It is the less to be wondred at, that an Heathen King misinterpreted the dejected countenance of *Nehemiah*,

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Job. 2. 2. seeing Godly *Eli*, mis-censured *Mannah*, as a distempered Woman, when she was in bitterness of Spirit, *1 Sam. 1. 14, 15.* and *Job's* friends mis-judged him for his afflictions, and Men generally misconstrued Christ's sufferings, *Isa. 53. 4, 5.* They are not always the best that are merriest, nor they the merriest in heart that are so in the face. Nor are they always of the weakest Faith, or Spirit, who are sometimes dejected, as we see *Joshua* was, in *Josh. 7.* Therefore be not rash, or harsh in censuring the dejected; but rather work with God for their support and comfort. Two things are required hereunto; knowledge, and goodness, *Rom. 15. 14.* The first will make you able, the second willing to be helpful to such. Labour to abound in both, 1. In knowledge both of the word. *Col. 3. 16.* and of the temper of the party, that you may speak to them suitably, and seasonably, *Isa. 56. 4. 2.* In goodness, to pity them, to pray for them, and to set them in joynt. *Gal. 6. 1.*

2. As for your selves, beware that you mis-judge not your own estate towards God, under such dejections, but know that, if ever you had any clear testimony of God's Love to you, in Jesus Christ, the love of God toward you in Christ is unchangeable, it is an everlasting Love, *Jer. 31. 3.* Therefore hold the Confidence and Rejoycing of your Hope firm unto the end, *Heb. 3. 6.* and say, with the Church, in *Mich. 7. 8.* When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Use

Use 2. For Admonition. Take heed of placing your Comfort too much in the Creature, which being subject to change, and inconstancy, will be apt to breed disquietment. Vexation inseparably follows Vanity, when Vanity is not apprehended to be where it is. In what degree any are lifted up in expectation of satisfying good from creatures, or overjoyed with the comforts of them, in that degree they are dejected in the disappointment of their hope, and distressed in the loss of Creature-contentments. Inordinacy of Affections imbitters all Afflictions. Hence arise those bitter Complaints; I had settled my contentment and hope in such a Friend, or Relation, but now they are gone, and with them all my joy is gone. Woe is me, I am undone! Therefore Agur prayed wisely, in Prov. 30. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies. i. e. vain and false apprehensions, whereby the Affections are too strongly fixed upon things that are vain, and lying, promising that contentment, which they cannot yield; confidence in vanities makes them Idols, and makes the heart vain, like the things it relies upon, Psal. 115. 8. They shall find continual disquietment who walk in a vain shadow. Psal. 39. 6. The best remedy against this is, by dwelling in the secret of the most High, to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psal. 91. 1, 2.*

Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, &c.*

The words having been Considered as they lie in the Context, as a part of a Lamentation; we proceed to handle them as in my Text they hold forth the expression of a free Spirit, that is, of a Spirit set at liberty from those sad perplexities, wherein it had been intangled, and held under deep dejection, and despondency. The Text, thus considered, containeth the Anchor-Hold of a tossed afflicted Spirit: wherein three particulars are to be noted. 1. An Assertion, *The Lord is my portion.* 2. A Proof of it, *saith my soul.* 3. A Confectary, or inference from the Premisses; *Therefore will I hope in him.* I shall speak only of the first, at this time: *The Lord is my portion.* Now a part, or portion, is not to be taken here in the Mathematical or Common use of that word, as denoting a part of a whole as it is frequently in Scripture, when that part of estate, which Parents give their Children, is called their portion, *Gen. 31. 14.* and that part of the spoyl, which is the Soldiers share, is called their portion, *Gen. 14. 24.* and that *Dimensum* of food, which is allowed unto any, is called their portion, *Deut. 18. 8.* and the Alms given to the Poor is called their portion, *Ecc. 12. 2.* For God is not parted or divided, and distributed among his People, so as one hath one part of him, another another part of God; but every one hath whole God wholly; as the whole Sun shines to every one, in which respect God is called

called a *Sun. Psal. 84. 11.* Therefore God is said to be his peoples Portion, not in a comparative, but in an absolute sense, God himself is theirs, a suitable and all-sufficient good to them. They have not only gifts and all good things from him, but himself also to be their God, in the Covenant of Grace, through Jesus Christ. He is their portion, though not formally, yet in two senses: 1. *Objectively*, as he is their ultimate end, and chief good. 2. *Causally*, as he gives, together with himself, in Christ, all good to them. The Doctrinal note shall be this:

Doct. All true Believers have such a blessed interest in God, as renders him their portion. It is the voice of Faith, to say, *The Lord is my portion*: Others may say, the Lord is an all-sufficient portion: But only Believers can truly say, *The Lord is my portion*. Because only Faith interests a Man in God, and appropriates him to him. This Faith doth by a double act. 1. By a direct act, whereby true believers see in God those properties, which are required in a satisfying portion. They are three: 1. All-sufficiency. 2. Perpetuity. 3. Safety in placing his Happiness and full Contentment there. All these the Scripture declares to be in God alone. 1. Sufficiency, *Gen. 17. 1. Psal. 84. 11.* 2. Perpetuity. It tells us, that *he is without shadow of change, Jam. 1. 17.* and that *he will never fail, nor forsake his people, Heb. 13. 5.* 3. Safety, in placing all

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our Contentment and Happiness in him alone, Ps. 144. 15. 2. By a reflected act of Faith, a believer seeth his peculiar right and interest in God, as his portion. Hence David saith, *The Lord is the portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup*, Psal. 16. 5. and, *Thou art my portion*, O Lord, Ps. 119. 57. and Asaph, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire, besides thee*: And again, *God is the strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever*, Ps. 73. 25, 26. To clear this, two things must be added: 1. The grounds, whereupon the Saints have claimed this Interest in God, as their portion. 2. The use they have made of God, under this notion and relation. For the first their Title unto God, as their portion, is founded: 1. In God's voluntary and free donation of himself to them, in the Covenant of Grace, whereby both they become his portion. Deut. 32. 9. *The Lords portion is his people*, and he becomes their portion; *The portion of Jacob is the former of all things: The Lord of Hosts is his Name*, Jeremiah 10. 16. An act so done, by one that is, *Sui juris*, is a strong binding act, as Peter argued in the case of Ananias, Acts 5. 4. It was free and deliberate and therefore exceedingly dishonourable to break it. God stands much upon his honour in this Ps. 89. 34. *My Covenant will I not break*. And Ps. 111. 5. *He will ever be mindful of his Covenant*. 2. This donation is confirmed sundry

sundry ways: 1. By Oath. *Pf. 89. 35.* *Once have I sworn by my holiness.* Again, in *Pfal. 105. 9.* *He remembered his Oath unto Isaac.* The Covenant of Grace, whereby God gives himself to be his Peoples God and Portion. *Micah saith, God hath unto our Fathers from the days of old, Micah 7. ult.* Which also *Zachary* declares to be performed when he sent Christ, *Luke 1. 73.* 2. By Seals: As Circumcision is called a Seal of the Righteousness, which is by Faith, *Rom. 4. 11.* because it eternally Sealed the Covenant, whereby God becomes the God of his People, *Gen. 17. 7, 11.* So it is, with both the Sacraments of the New Testament, by parity of reason. 3. By Marriage unto Christ, *Hos. 2. 19, 20.* Agreements upon Marriage are firm, because upon rational Consideration. A Consideration inserted adds weight to a Deed and Covenant. The Consideration is, that we should be joyned unto the Lord Jesus, and then all the promises of God, in him, are *Yea and Amen to us*, in him, *2. Cor. 1. 20.* And Christ's God and Father is our God and Portion, *Joh. 20. 17.* 4. By a Recovery, after Judgment, if I may so speak, when, after they are fallen into God's displeasure, and returned to him, with Repentance for and from their Sins, and renewing their Faith in Christ, they have renewed their taking hold of the Covenant, and have pleaded it with God, and their Plea hath been accepted. Thus did *Moses* for *Israel*, after

After they had Sinned in the matter of the Golden Calf, *Exod. 32. 10, 13.* and the *Israelites* for themselves, *Isa. 63. 10, 16, 17, 19.* The second thing to be shewn is, what use the Saints have made in their Right and Interest in God, as their portion: They have made use of him thus, both for themselves and others. For themselves: 1. To Glory in God; *This God is our God. Psal. 48. ult.* 2. To delight themselves in the Lord, in confidence of his Goodness to them, in the midst of Temptations, *Psal. 37. 4.* Whence followeth a rowling themselves upon him in all their Ways and Difficulties, *verse 5.* and a patient waiting upon God in Delays, with hope of a good Issue, *verse 7.* 2. For others, whether they be Friends or Enemies, or of a middle sort. 1. Friends, A poor Believer can pleasure his richest Friends out of this his Portion, his God. This is a Prophet's and a righteous Man's Reward, *Mat. 10. 41.* Thus *Paul* abundantly recompenced all his Friends and Well-willers out of his Portion, *Phil. 4. 19. My God shall supply all your need, according to his Riches in Glory by Jesus Christ!* 2. Enemies: In Jesus Christ all Believers have sufficient help from God against all sorts of Enemies, and can, in an Holy manner, challenge them to do their worst, and triumph over them, before the Battle, upon this Assurance, *My God will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded, Isa. 50. 7, 8, 9.* Other Men are strong in Men, in Arms, in Shipping, in

in Fortifications, &c. a Believer hath all in God, he is *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his Might*, Eph. 6. 10. 3. A middle sort; *Laban* fared the better for *Jacob*; *Potiphar*, *Pharaoh*, and all *Egypt*, for *Joseph*; the *Sodomites* for *Lot*; the *Mariners*, and all that were in the *Ship*, for *Paul*, Acts 27. 24. The *World* for the *Saints*, for the *Holy Seed* are

the Props that shoar up the places where they Live, that the *Wrath of God* doth not overflow, and overwhelm them, Isa. 6. 13.

Use. 1. For Instruction: Hence learn to behold and admire the Excellence and Happiness of every true Believer in his Portion. The All-sufficient God is their Portion: His Greatness, Power, Mercy, Grace, Goodness, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Justice, all are for them; and, that they may possess him as their Portion, he gives them his Son to be theirs, through Faith, and with him all things, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. Thus, *The Brother of low Degree is Exalted*, Jam. 1. 9. He hath the best Portion that God can give, and upon the best Assurance that God can make, Heb. 6. 18. Hence *David* calleth such *the excellent Ones*, Psal. 16. 3: He had conversed with rich Men, great Men, wise Men, after the *Flesh*; yet he called none of them *excellent Ones*: He well knew that *the Righteous is more Excellent than his Neighbour*, Prov. 12. 26:

Use 2. For Exhortation: 1. Generally to all, to make out for this Portion; to this end,

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wait upon God in his Ordinances with thirsting souls: It will not be in vain, *Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3.* *Prov. 8. 34, 35.* For thereby, either it shall be cleared unto you, that the Lord is your Portion, or the Lord will become your Portion. And he is so unto them, in whom Faith is wrought in Christ by the Spirit, in the Ministry of the Gospel. They that can say to Christ, with *Thomas, My Lord and my God,* *Joh. 20. 28.* may also say to God, with *David,* in *Pf. 142. 5.* *O Lord, thou art my refuge and my portion in the Land of the Living.* This is the priviledge of those, who answer God's call, by joyning to him in Covenant. So saith the Lord, *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becomest mine,* *Ezek. 16. 8.* And again, in *Hos. 2. 23.* *I will say unto them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

To perswade you hereunto, Consider, 1. Every man desires to have the best, for his portion in other things, in houses, land, food, apparel, cattle. But this portion is simply absolutely the best. This Christ teacheth, in *Luke 16. 12.* This he calls our own, those another mans. When a man views houses, or surveys land, or tells money for another man, his heart is not so affected with them, as when he views, surveys, tells for himself. Propriety draws and engages the heart to that wherein a man hath a property, though it be but mean and worthless, and carrieth the heart after it ;

much more, when propriety and a most worthy property meet together; as *David* found this to be, *Pf.* 4. 6, 7. 2. The misery of those that have not this portion, *Eph.* 2. 12. Little, or rather no cause, have such to bless themselves in their worldly portions and possessions, as worldly men are apt to do, *Pf.* 49. 18. For they have their portion only in this life, which is but a vapour: But believers are happy in their portion, in God, both in, and after this life: For they shall behold his face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied, when they awake with his likeness, *Pf.* 17. 14, 15. Attend therefore, in time, to the counsel of Christ, in *Rev.* 3. 17, 18.

2. Specially, to believers, to behave themselves as it becomes those, who have God for their portion. That you may so do, 1. Professedly avouch God to be your portion, *Deut.* 26. 17. This is done two ways. 1. When you set your love upon him, with such an esteem of him, as is meet for such a portion. *Where a mans treasure is, there will his heart be also, Matth.* 6. 21. Let God be your treasure, when you look upon all things in the World, single out those that you account most amiable, desirable; then ascend, in your thoughts to heaven, and contemplate all the excellencies there, the rivers of Pleasure, the blessed fellowship of Saints in glory; each of them as dear to another, as if all relations of Husbands, and Wives, of Parents, and Children, and Friends,

were

were in every one of them; yet let God and Christ be above them all. So did *Asaph*, *Pf.* 73. 25. So will every one that knows God's Name aright, *Pf.* 91. 14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my Name.* 2. When you are content to part with all, to enjoy him alone. A maid will say of a man whom she loves, I will have him, though I beg my bread with him. A man will lay out his estate, in suit for his own. 3. When you live in the World with affections free from worldly ingagements, as Pilgrims, whose hearts are at home, when their feet are travelling abroad. 2. Possess and use, and injoy God, as your Portion; Thus, 1. Live upon God as the Israelites in *Canaan* did upon their lots and inheritance: Live upon God's favour, in Christ, *Pf.* 30. 5. And upon his promises, *Isa.* 38. 16, Live by the faith of the Son of God, *Gal.* 2. 20. fetching all your comfort thence, 2. Walk with God, *Gen.* 5. 24. and work in God, *Joh.* 3. 21. marry in the Lord, live unto the Lord, exalting his ends, and rules in all things: 3. Cast all your care upon him, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. you may try men in smaller things, before you trust them with greater; especially if they be strangers. But it is dishonourable to God, if you do not, at the first, trust him with all that you are, and have. When mens hearts sink in every danger, it is from a defect, either of faith, or in faith. See how Christ reproveth

Peter, Math. 14. 30, 31. David's first recourse to God, and whatever means he used, he looked up to him, *Pf. 5. 3, 4. Live contentedly,* when you enjoy God in his Ordinances, without covetousness, *Heb. 13. 5. and without discontentedness,* because of outward afflictions, or wants. *David, as he was the sweet singer of Israel,* so he expressed a sweet frame of Spirit, in *2 Sam. 23. 5. He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire, &c. 5. Make up all your happiness in God.* A worldly man, when he views his houses, lands, cattle, barns filled with corn, &c. his heart is cheered, like that rich fool, in *Luke 12. 19. but see the vanity of that joy,* in the answer of God to him, ver. 20. But a true believer hath true cause of rejoycing in his portion, having such an estate in God, and Christ, and the Covenant, that he shall want nothing, *Pf. 23. 1. his down-lyings and up-risings, himself and his children are well provided for what, though his estate lyeth not in lands, or monies, or plenty of corn and cattle? he hath that which is better, for his portion.* A believer is a citizen of Heaven; there is his inheritance; things on Earth are added to him, only *pro viatico*, while he is travelling thitherward.

Lam. 3. 24. Saith my Soul.

Having spoken of the Assertion, *the Lord is my portion*; we are now, with Christ's assistance,

stance, to speak to the proof of it, *saith my Soul*. The Church proveth that the Lord is their portion, by their souls saying it. Where note, 1. The Principle of this speech, *their soul*, which sheweth that there is a mental as well as a vocal speaking. *The fool saith in his heart, there is no God.* Ps. 14. 1, when his tongue speaketh and professeth the contrary, Tit. 1. 16. 2. That, by an act of the soul reflexeth upon it self, they knew what their soul said. So David, in Ps. 16. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, thou art my Lord.* 3. That the use they make hereof is, to prove two things: 1. That the Lord is their portion. 2. That they know that the Lord is their portion. 1. To prove that the Lord is their portion, they argue thus: What the soul saith is a man's portion, that is his portion. But my soul saith, the Lord is my portion; therefore the Lord is my portion. 2. To prove that they know that the Lord is their portion, they argue thus: What a man knoweth that his soul saith is his portion, that he knoweth to be his portion. But I know that my soul saith, the Lord is my portion; therefore I know that the Lord is my portion. In like manner, David putting up his petition, *Preserve me, O God*, presseth it with this motive, *for in thee do I trust*, and he proveth that he trusteth in God, by an Apostrophe, a turning of his speech, to his soul, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my God.* And this he

confirmeth from the testimony of his own soul and conscience, *Pf. 16. 1, 2.* and thence inferred, *The Lord is the portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup,* ver. 5. *q. d.* The Lord is my land and revenue, and food, he supplies all, and is himself above all, better than all, unto me.

D. When a believer knoweth that his soul saith, the Lord is his portion, he hath from thence a clear proof that the Lord is his portion. For the proving of this point, two things must be declared.

1. That a true believer may know that his soul saith, the Lord is his portion. *David* knew it, when he saith, *O God! my soul trusteth in thee,* *Pf. 17. 1.* He knew that he trusted in God, as one trusteth in his treasure; and in *Pf. 84. 2.* *My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* As, when an house is on fire, and all is in danger to be lost, the owner cryeth out, oh, let me have my casket of Jewels, my box of Evidences, they are my treasures, the principal of my estate, I am not undone, unless I lose them. And then, as his desire is ardent, so his expectation is earnest for them, looking when they shall be delivered to him. Saith he, have you them? have you found them? As the Church said to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, concerning her beloved, *Cant. 5. 8.* and 3. 3. and, as any hope appeareth, he is the more encouraged to wait, yet still watching and observing if he can get the sight of them.

So David, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning, Ps. 130. 6.* And, as David knew thus that the Lord was his portion; so may other believers, as Paul argues in a like case, from David's Example, *2 Cor. 4. 13.* From parity of reason, seeing we have the same helps as he had.

R. 1. From the proper excellency, or excellent property of the reasonable soul, that it can reflect, and discern its own internal acts; much more the renewed soul, *1 Joh. 2. 3.*

R. 2. From the office and power of Conscience, to testifie what is within a man. This the Apostle notes in natural men, *Rom. 2. 15.* and in believers, *1 Joh. 3. 20, 21.*

R. 3. From the spirit of God, joyning with the renewed spirits of Believers, *Rom. 8. 16.* and *9. 1; 2. My Conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.* And the Holy Spirit brings into the soul a self-evidencing light, whereby he doth manifest unto the renewed soul, that it is himself, and no delusion, who testifieth to us our interest in God: *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit, 1 Joh. 4. 13.* For the Spirit is given for this end, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, *1 Cor. 2. 12.*

2. That a Believer, from his souls saying, the Lord is his portion, hath a good proof that the Lord is his portion. So the Church,

in *Pf.* 33. 20. from knowledge that their soul waiteth for the Lord, proves, that he is their help and their shield, and from thence they infer, in ver. 21. *Our heart shall rejoyce in him, because we have trusted in his Holy Name.* So David proved his interest in God, by his souls thirsting for him, *Pf.* 63. 1. and, by his souls following hard after him, ver. 8. The same holds in other believers also.

R. 1. Because the souls saying, the Lord is my portion, is the answering of the soul unto God, calling his Elect effectually, by the ministry of the Gospel, out of the World and sin and self, unto himself, in Jesus Christ. There is an outward calling by the ministry of man only, of which the Prophet speaks, in *Hof.* 11. 7. *Though they called them to the most High, yet none would exalt him.* This is ineffectual, unto spiritual conversion, of it self, without the quickning efficacies of the Spirit. But when this is added, and worketh with the ministry of man (which of it self foundeth only in the ear) then God speaketh to the heart, *Hof.* 2. 14. Therefore the Father draweth the Elect unto his Son, *Joh.* 6. 44, 45. Then they hear the voice of the Son of God, which they that hear, shall live, *Joh.* 5. 25. The soul, being thus quickned, answers the call of God with the obedience of Faith, as David found, in *Pf.* 27. 8. *Thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart answered, thy face Jehovah, do I seek* This answer is the voice of the whole soul un

to God. The understanding, being inlightned and fully convinced, closeth with God, in Christ, as the first truth, and the will chooseth him as the chiefest good; the affections rest satisfied with him alone, and the whole soul placeth all its happiness in its enjoyment of him, and conformity to him. Hope waits for him, desire longeth after him, and joy delighteth in him above all things. The Lord calleth the whole soul to come unto him, that it may find true rest, in voluntarily subjecting it self under his yoke, *Mat. 11. 28, 29.* and the whole soul, in all its faculties and affections, answereth, as the Church did, in *Jer. 3. 22. Lo, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord, our God.* With renouncing all other refuges, as they did, in ver. 23. according to that promise, in *Hos. 2. 23. I will say, thou art my People, and they shall say, thou art my God.*

R. 2. Because the souls saying, the Lord is my portion, argues unfeigned love of God, in Christ. For all the affections depend on love. What a man loveth, as his portion, he desireth to possess and enjoy; and any impediment thereof stirs up his anger proportionably to this esteem and love of it. As we see with what eagerness and earnestness men endeavour to remove any thing that hinders their credits, or estates, &c. Now if any love God above the world, above themselves, they will be more jealous of God's honour than their own, and against that which tends to God's dishonour.

than against what crosseth their own worldly honour. Hence will arise hatred against sin, because God hates it, both in our selves, *Ps. 97. 10.* and in others, *Rev. 2. 6.* Anger is against particulars, but hatred is general. Anger seeks revenge with moderation, in proportion to the wrong done us, but hatred seeks the destruction of it's object. Anger is placable, but hatred is implacable. And according to the degree of mens, love to any thing will be their fear of being deprived of it, and separated from it, and of all causes and signs of alienation from it.

R. 3. Because the souls saying, The Lord is my portion, importeth the highest actings of the soul upon God. When *Job* said, *The things that my soul refuseth to touch, Job 6. 7.* He shewed the greatest detestation of them; and when he said, *My soul chuseth death rather than life, Job 7. 15.* he shewed a most vehement desire. And when the Lord said, *I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul, Jer. 32. 41.* he shewed the firmness of his purpose. So when the soul saith, The Lord is my portion, it argues the most full and firm cleaving unto God, with purpose of heart, as *Barnabas* exhorted them to do, in *Acts 11. 23.* else men do not return to him, nor cleave to him, as to the most High, *Hos. 7. 16.* unless they turn to him with all their heart, *Joel 2. 12.* and love him with all their heart, *Deut. 30. 6.* For, it is by such a love

love that faith works, which is a believing with all the heart, *Acts* 8. 37. and produceth obedience from the heart, *Rom.* 6. 17. which is done when all the faculties and affections of the soul do open themselves, and stand open, to give entertainment unto God, in Christ, as the King of Glory, *Pf.* 24. 7. When the Keys of the whole house, and every room in it, are delivered up for the use and service of a King, he is entertained like a King. Inferiour guests are content, one with one room, another with another, and sometimes two have but one room, yea, one bed for them both; but the King must have all. So it is in this case, when the God of Glory appeared unto *Abraham*, and called him; *Abraham* obeyed him without reservation, *Acts* 7. 2, 3. So must we, yea, so will all, whose souls say, the Lord is their portion.

Use 1. For Instruction, in four Particulars, 1. Hence learn how a Man may know when afflictions are sanctified and blessed unto him, i. e. when the eye of the soul is by them turned. 1. Upward, to look unto God for an Interest in him, as their portion. 2. Inward, to reflect upon the inward actings of the soul, that they may know their interest in God, as their portion. Indeed afflictions of themselves work the contrary, to estrange us from God, and from our selves, and Satan labours to foment and increase a separation of the soul from God, and a division, and distraction of the soul with-

within it self. Therefore it is by an over-
ruling Power and sanctifying Efficacy of God's
spirit, when they cause us to return unto the
Lord, *Hos. 6. 1.* and to our selves, *Luke 15. 17,*
18. It is a sure rule of discerning ones self to
be in the state of Grace, when he finds that e-
very condition brings him nearer to God, and
every sanctifying gift of Grace is quickned to
it's proper function, to turn the faculty and af-
fection of the soul, in which it is planted, un-
to God, *Rom. 8. 28, 29.* God is a pure act,
always acting: and every one, the nearer he
comes to God, the more gracious frame of spi-
rit he hath, and the more spiritual affections,
and suitable actings of them, sweetly issuing
from thence;

2. Learn hence a profitable use of spiritual
soliloquies, which are a Man's speaking within
himself, to himself, about spiritual things. *Da-*
vid prescribes communing with a Man's own
heart, to further his repentance, *Pf. 4. 4.* and
himself made use of it, to quicken his Faith,
Pf. 42. 5. So the Church in my Text, in times
of affliction, being driven out of their creature-
comforts, and expectations, they communed,
and parlied with their own souls, to clear un-
unto themselves their interest in God, as their
portion, and to excite their faith and hope in
him unto exercise.

3. Learn hence, not to rest in outward pro-
fession, in words, that the Lord is your portio-
on. Many Hypocrites say so, whose hearts
cleave

cleave to something else, as their portion; some to their sinful walls, and ways. They draw near unto God with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from him. Such were those in *Hos. 8. 23. Israel will cry unto me, my God, we know thee, when, Israel hath cast off the thing that is good; even God himself, in whom and from whom is all good, and the good word of God, and the rules thereof; though they thus departed from him, yet, in their distress, they were ready to claim an interest in him. Others, to their worldly objects. They lay up treasures for themselves on earth, and there their hearts are, Mat. 6. 19. 21. Their belly is their God, and portion, that mind earthly things, Phil. 3. 19. These steal away their hearts from God, even while they are hearing the Word; Ezek. 33. 31. All, to one Idol, or other, like those of whom the Prophet speaks, in Isa. 57. 6. Among the smooth stones of streams is thy portion; they, they are thy lot. A woful portion have all such, for at present, their portion is cursed in the earth, Job 24. 18. and for the future, God will rain upon them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their Cup, Ps. 11. 6. Again, 2. Rest not in some occasional speeches of some one affection alone. Balaam had a transient desire, that his latter end might be like theirs, who had the Lord for their portion, Numb. 23. 10. This is but the saying of one assertion, for a short time. Nothing is to be accounted*

as said by the soul, unless all the faculties and affections of the soul, consent in it, acting suitably, *Pf. 103. 1.*

4. Learn hence, to make out for an interest in God, as your portion. This is to be had only by and in Jesus Christ, *Joh. 20. 17.* For *it pleased the Father, that in Christ, God incarnate, all fulness should dwell, Col. 1. 19.* and, *that out of his fulness we all should receive, and grace for grace, Joh. 1. 16.* So that Christ is the immediate fountain of all spiritual blessings unto the Elect, *Eph. 1. 3.* God's next end, in this dispensation, is, *that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father, Joh. 5. 23.* which they do, when they come to the Father by the Son, *Joh. 14. 6.* and therefore come to the Son first, seeking to have an interest in him, and then in the Father, by union and communion with him, through faith in the Son of God, *1 Joh. 1. 3.* Let those who are out of Christ, see their misery, in that state, and the remedy thereof in Christ, and accordingly value him above all things, *Rev. 3. 17, 18. Mat. 13. 45.* Let those that have him, seek more full communion with him, prizing that above all things, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* and answerably prize the word, as *David*, who said unto God, *the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of Gold and Silver, Ps. 119. 72.* See that the word be mixed with faith in your hearts, to receive Christ thereby, as God offereth him unto you in his word, *Joh. 1. 12.* Shew it to be

be so, really and not in outward profession only, by setting your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, *Col. 3. 1, 2.* and by your driving an Heavenly trade, in this World, *Phil. 3. 20.*

Use 2. For comfort to all who can thus say, The Lord is their portion, *i. e.* to all true Believers, who know that their soul saith the Lord is their portion; be exhorted to rejoyce in your portion, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoyce, Phil. 4. 4.* Have you plenty of outward things? Reioyce in them, but in the Lord, *Jer. 9. 23, 24.* In him alone you have fully enough. There is a vast difference between *Jacob's* portion and *Esau's*, though the Translation holdeth forth each of them, as saying, I have enough, yet the Original varieth their expressions, *Esau* said, *I have much, Gen. 33. 9.* but *Jacob* said, *I have all, ver. 11.* *Esau* had much in worldly things, but not enough: *Jacob* had enough in God, who was his All-sufficient portion. Are you in any want? *Habent omnia, qui habent habentem omnia*, they cannot want any thing, who have him to be their portion, who hath all things. In wants of outward things, say with *David, Ps. 23. 1.* *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall want nothing;* and with the Church, *Hab. 3. 17, 18.* *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, nor fruits be in the vine, and the fields yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and no herds in the stalls; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my sal-*

salvation. In spiritual wants, the God of all Grace, Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, is your God and Portion; you have all in him, and shall have all that is good for you from him. *Pf. 84. 11.* Are you in fear of dangers? Say as *David*, in *Pf. 27. 1.* *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? &c. Pf. 27. 1, 2, 3.* Again, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved, &c. *Pf. 46. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Lastly, are you in as great distress as *David* was, in *1 Sam. 30. 3, 4, 5, 6*; Yet even then take the course that he took. What was that? *David* comforted himself in the Lord his God. So do you, rejoyce in this your portion. For it is, 1. All sufficient. 2. Everlasting.

Lam. 3. 24. Therefore will I hope in him.

We have already spoken of two parts of the Text; the assertion, *the Lord is my portion*, and the proof of it; *saith my soul.* We now proceed to the third, the inference, which the Church draws from the premises; *therefore will I hope in him.* In which words three particulars are to be noted. 1. The reason, whereupon their hope was grounded [*therefore.*] 2. The resolution of their will to act according to that reason [*I will.*] 3. The act it self resolved upon, together with the proper object of it [*hope in him.*] For the first, the reason whereupon their hope was grounded. This illa-

allative particle, *therefore*, notes the result of a Discourse in the minds of Believers, whereby they compare one thing with another, and gather one thing from another; and thence conclude to act suitably to the truest and best reason. Faith is an understanding Grace, and knows what use to make of the souls interest in God. When a Man hath God for his Portion, and knows it, then faith inferreth it is my duty, and it is for my good to hope in him: Therefore I will hope in him. Reason of it self, in this corrupt state of fallen Man, cannot teach men to hope in God. But when God hath in the word of promise given himself to us to be our portion, and faith hath closed with him, as our portion; and the word telleth us it is our duty, and for our good to hope in him, then faith seeth good reason that we should hope in him. Faith useth reason, though not as the ground, yet as a sanctified instrument, to find out God's grounds, that it may rely upon him. He believes best, who best knows, why he belives, and he best hopes in God, who can give the best reasons for his hoping in him. The affections, though they have not reason grafted in them, yet they are thus far reasonable, that, in all that are godly-wise, they are raised up, and laid down, guided, and actuated, by sanctified reason, which is the highest and best reason.

Doct. They that hope in God aright, have their hope in him raised, and strengthened by good

good and strong Reasons. Reasons fetched from God, and from the soul knowing its Interest in him, as his Portion, are good and strong Reasons for our hoping in him; and such are the Reasons which the Church, in my Text, gives of their hoping in God. They considered God's All-sufficiency in himself, and to every one that hath him for his portion, and what interest themselves had in him, through Faith in Christ, and thereupon conclude; therefore will I hope in him. So may all Believers.

R. 1 From the inseparable connexion of Hope with Faith; Faith believes in Christ and in God, through Christ, upon God's authority in his Word; and what Faith believes, Hope expects. The Reasons for a Believer's hoping in God, are as good and strong, as for his believing in him. For, as naturally, Beams comes from the Sun, and Branches from the Root; so, by spiritual Discourse, one Truth issueth from another: and, as the Sun and its Beams, the Roots and Branches, are all of one Nature; so the grounds of comfortable Truths, and reasons taken from those grounds, are both of the same divine authority in themselves. Though in us, discourse is apt to be so troubled, in times of temptation, that we cannot see how one truth ariseth upon another; yet so far as Faith sees God to be our Portion, the soul sees good and strong Reason for our hoping in him for all good, that may suit all our needs, in the best season.

R. 2. From the convincing light, which the Spirit of God bringeth into the Soul, when he worketh Faith and Hope in it. It is the office and work of the Spirit, to convince, and, by convincing, to comfort, *Joh. 16. 7, 8.* Conviction is a clear and infallible demonstration, and comfort is a demonstration, with application unto us, of better and stronger reasons to raise us up, than those are which tend to cast down our souls. When the Spirit convinceth, he bringeth such a full and powerful light into the soul, as silenceth all disputes and cavils, and causeth the soul to yield, as overcome by the evidence and authority of the light and truth brought into it. Light hath a convincing property and force in it. When we see the light of the Sun, we know it is day, and will not believe those that shall deny it, though they were ten thousand, because the conviction hereof is undeniable, it is an unreasonable thing to deny it. So the spirit of God brings an undeniable light into the Soul, which discovers the vanity of those windings, and turnings, whereof mens deceitful hearts are so full, that there can be no thorough conviction, and effectual to salvation, without the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. A common conviction there may be, by the light of Nature, or of a natural Conscience, or of some common transient work of the Holy Spirit, but that is but weak: For either it discovers but little, as a little spark shews little light, not enough to lighten the room, by over-

Overcoming the darkness, and turning it into light; or the light which it shews, it shews but weakly, like a flash of lightning, or a blaze in straw, that is soon out again. But saving conviction is a greater and stronger light, like the light of the Sun, which is a full and powerful light. This is only from the sanctifying Spirit of God. This light shews the evil of Sin, and the good of the contrary, in their spiritual nature and compass, and draws the will answerably, from the one to the other, by converting grace, *Acts* 26. 18. This light is abiding in the renewed soul. Thus the Church, in my Text, was convinced and comforted, in their great distress, by the Spirit and Word of God, so as they could hold forth good and strong Reasons, whereupon their Hope was strengthened, and their Hearts were comforted in sad hours.

Use 1. For Instruction, two-fold: 1. Learn hence to examine and try the Reasons, whereby you are moved to act; whether they be good, or not good. Reason is a beam of God's light. What comes from God, carrieth the Soul to God; Therefore that which draws the Soul from God, cannot be a good reason, it is not right Reason, but falsely called reason, it is not from Faith, but Unbelief, not good, but evil, *Heb.* 3. 12. Hence no good Reason can be given for any Sin. Whatever reasons are pretended for it, they are not according to God's Logick, but the Devil's

So.

Sophistry, *Jam.* 1. 22. παραλογίζομενοι ἑαυτούς,
 They deceive themselves with false Sillogisms.
 You may find in *Jam.* 3. 15. three Topicks,
 from whence all such arguings are fetcht, the
 World, the Flesh, and the Devil, the three
 great Enemies of God's Glory, and of Christ's
 Kingdom in us: yet they will pretend their
 good intention for God's honour, when they
 seek to themselves worldly profits by disobey-
 ing God's Commandment. So did *Saul*, but
Samuel refuted all his false pleas, 1 *Sam.* 15.
 21, 22, 23. See how the Scripture reproves
 such as encourage themselves to do evil, that
 good may come thereon, *Rom.* 3. 7, 8. *Job*
 sharply took up his friends for this, in *Job* 13.
 7. Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk
 deceitfully for him? yet thus the Devil de-
 ceiveth his active instruments against Christ,
 the time cometh (saith Christ in *Joh.* 16. 2.)
 that whosoever killeth you, will think he
 doth God service. There are that argue from
 worldly advantages to encourage men to Sin,
Prov. 1. 13. But Christ shews the pernicious
 delusion of such reasonings, in *Mat.* 16. 26.
 others from the pleasure of carnal liberty, but
Peter shews the falseness of that plea, in 2 *Pet.*
 2. 19. others from worldly preferment of
 wicked men, *Mal.* 3. 15. which the Prophet
 confuteth in verse 18. Some from God's Pa-
 tience, which God himself answereth, in *Pf.* 50.
 21, 22. Such as these are the *dialogismoι*, the
 Reasonings of natural Men, *Rom.* 1. 21. which
 should

should warn all Men to deny their carnal will
dom, which is enmity against God, *Rom. 8. 7.*

2. Learn hence to examine and try the good-
ness and strength of the Reasons, whereupon
it is grounded, remembring that rule in *1 Pet.*

*3. 15. Be ready always to give an answer to every
man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that*

is in you. You say, you hope in God, if you
have no reason for it, its a foolish unreasonable
hope. If you have but slight reasons; its a vain
hope. And such is hope of the most: one

grounds, his hope of Salvation upon his crea-
tion, saying, I am God's creature, and he hath
not make me to damn me: Therefore I hope
he will save me. See the delusion of this plea,

1. Are not the Devils God's creatures? yet
they are damned. 2. Though God's end in

making you, was not to damn you, yet your
impenitency in Sin, and unbelief will damn
you. 3. See the Lords own refutation of this

plea, in *Isa. 27. 11.* Another grounds his hope
of Blessedness upon God's blessing him, as he
calls it, with worldly success, and prosperity.

But Christ shews the vanity of this hope in
that rich Man in Hell, *Luke 16. 25.* and by
telling us that *it is they that shall be destroyed*

for ever, Ps. 92. 7. God's end in prospering
such in the world, is like *Ester's* end in feasting
Haman. Another grounds his hope that he

shall have Heaven hereafter, because he hath
had his Hell, through affliction, in this life.
But such consider not what the Word saith

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concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude 7. Suffering the vengeance of eternal Fire. What misery wicked impenitent sinners suffer here, is but a beginning and pledge to them of Hell hereafter. Another grounds his Hope upon his Christian priviledges and performances. But this is plentifully refuted in Scripture, by John's speech to the Pharisees, Mat. 3. 9. and Paul's to the Romans, Rom. 2. 28. and concerning himself, Phil. 3. 7. Others ground their Hope upon God's Mercy, though they continue in their Sins. This indeed is a good reason for Hope, in those that confess and forsake their Sin, Prov. 28. 13. But for those that abuse this Mercy to the hardning of themselves in Sin by it, see how the Lord thunders against such, in Deut. 29. 19, 20. Others ground their Hope upon their own self-flattering and self-deceiving thoughts of themselves. Such may see their own folly and madness, by what the Scripture saith, in Prov. 28. 26. and Gal. 6. 3. Let all such, and the like renounce their ungrounded Hope, which, like that broken reed of Egypt, Isa. 36. 6. will at once both fail them, and ruin them. Till you have an Interest in God and Christ, as your portion, you are without hope, Eph. 2. 12. Therefore the first work of the Spirit, in the Soul, by the Gospel, and one great end of the ministry thereof, is, to make way for true Faith and Hope, by casting down those λογισμοι, reasonings, and bringing into Captivity every thought, παν νοημα, e-

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very sophistical reasoning; to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5.

Use 2. For Exhortation to Believers, being under temptations and afflictions, whether outward or inward, to improve the Reasons, which Faith supplieth, for the quickening and strengthening of their Hope in God. For, in such times, Faith is put to it to use Reasons. Indeed the soul needeth not that help so much, when it is in a clear and quiet state, for upon its close and sweet communion with God in Christ, and from some likeness between the renewed Soul and God, it presently, and without our previous Discourse, runneth to God, as by a supernatural instinct; as, by natural instinct, the Child runneth to his natural Parents, in danger and distress, with confidence. But, in dark times of great afflictions, and temptations, Faith is put to use Arguments, and Reasons to quicken and strengthen Hope. Accordingly, study the grounds of Hope, and improve them for your help. 1. Such as may be supplied from the inward store laid up in the Soul, as the Church did in my Text. 2. Such as are, or may be suggested by others: Harken, and yield to them, and close with them. For, thus you will shew that you have a frame of spirit suitable to any holy and comfortable truth, that shall be presented and applied to it. There is a principle in every renewed Spirit, that closeth with whatever cometh from God's Spirit, that readily claims acquain-

acquaintance and kindred with it, as coming from the same blessed spring, the Holy Spirit. When *Asaph* found the contrary in himself, that his soul refused comfort, and he remembered God and was troubled, *Psal. 77. 23.* he saw, and said, *this is mine infirmity, ver. 10.* He saw that it arose from a sickness, a spiritual disease, and distemper in his soul. While passion and temptation disturb the soul, they hinder the exercise of spiritual Reason: As we see in *David*, who said, in his haste, *all men are lyars, Ps. 116, 10, 11.* This he saw afterward, when his spiritual Reason had recovered it self, which before by his distemper was hindred in its working; then he admired God for his Benefits toward him, notwithstanding his provocation of him to have taken a contrary course with him, *ver. 12.* Labour therefore, 1. That your mind, which is the seat of Principles, be well furnished with divine and spiritual Truths. For false Principles can never produce true Comforts. As only Truth sanctifieth, *Joh. 17. 17.* So Truth only truly comforteth. There is the same reason of both. For it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, both to sanctifie, and to comfort: And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, *Joh. 16. 13.* Therefore he will not work by a falshood, but only by Truth, either Sanctification, or Consolation. 2. See that your understanding *dianoia*, the dianoetical, discoursing faculty, which is the Seat of Conclusions, be used to deduce from

Spiritual principles, as they are to beget. For by false Reasonings, in times of affliction and temptation. 1. Believers hinder their Faith and Hope, when they reason too much from sense and present feeling, *Isa.* 40. 27. and 49. 14. *Ezek.* 33. 10. 2. Others have false comfort from the Light of a Fire kindled by themselves *Isa.* 50. 11. But, if, renouncing such reasonings you fly to Christ and his Righteousness alone for your acceptance with God, through Faith in his Blood, with true Repentance; then you may reason with God, *Isa.* 1. 18. though not in your own strength and worth, *Job* 14. 19. yet you may reason with him in faithful fervent Prayer, in *Gen.* 32. 10, 11, 12. whereby he prevailed and got both a new Blessing and a new Name, *ver.* 28. Fervent Prayers are strong Reasonings with God, in Christ's strength, and for his sake. This will be well pleasing to God. For, as, when God calls for our obedience, he adds persuasives to his precepts, and reasoneth with us as well as commandeth us; so he alloweth us, in Prayer, to add persuasions to our Petitions, and to reason with him, as well as intreat him. Only, it must be our care that we reason from right Topicks, and heads of Arguments; Such as these, 1. From the infiniteness and freeness of God's Mercy and Grace. 2. From the immutable firmness of his Covenant and Promises in Christ. 3. From our indigence and dependence upon him. 4. From the concernment

of his Glory, and our necessary Good. In such reasonings of Faith and Hope, the Spirit, Strength, and Life of Prayer consisted. Such Pleadings, in the Name of Christ, God approveth and requireth, *Isa. 43. 26.* 3. See that the heart, which is the seat of practical knowledge, be fitted to order the Conversation and Practice, by sound principles, in the mind, and right conclusions, in the understanding; that mental Discourse may not vanish into meer empty speculation. As in my Text, *The Lord is my portion*, is the principle laid up in their mind, *saith my soul*, is the Proof of it; the Conclusion to be from thence inferred, is, Therefore it is my Duty to Hope in him. knowledge becomes practical, when the heart so receives it, that the will comes to a resolution; *therefore I will hope in him.* Which is the next particular to be spoken to.

Lam. 3. 24. Therefore I will hope in him.

The Reason alledged by the Church, is not so much an Argument to convince the judgment (though it contains that also, as we have before proved) as a Motive to induce and incline the will to hope in God. For trusting and hoping in God, being a relying and waiting upon God for future good, do especially carry the will to him. As the understanding is led with Truth, so the will is led with the Goodness of things. As the judgment must be convinced of God's ability, so the heart must

be sweetned with his love and readines to do us good, for the future, that we may hope in him. For meer knowledge and discourse cannot draw the heart to trust and hope in God, except it hath a relish of his goodness. Therefore *David* saith, *O taste and see that the Lord is good, Ps. 34. 8.* Those Reasons are most prevailing to incline the will towards God, which are drawn from the goodness of God, whereby the heart is opened and enlarged to expect all good, and nothing but good from him who is goodness it self, and our God and Portion, in *Jesus Christ*. This relish is wrought in the renewed Soul, by the Spirit of Faith, together with a light to discern our Interest in God.

Dott. The Reasons whereby Believers are quickned and strengthened to hope in God, do strongly incline their will to resolve to hope in him. This is obvious frequently in Scripture, that when the will is inclined to any spiritual good, it is upon spiritual reasons, the Spirit of God joyning his efficacy therewith, and leaving a powerful relish of that good in the soul. This you may see in *Psal. 40. 8. Cant. 1. 3, 4. Jer. 3. 22.* and in sundry Texts.

R. 1. From the different manner of the Souls guiding the will, and the Bodily members. The Soul swayeth the will and affections, as Counsellors do a well ordered state, by propounding reasons to them. But the Soul governeth the Bodily members, as a Master doth

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doth his slaves, by meer command. The will moves the Hands and Feet, &c. by command, without giving them Reasons. But the will and affections move not without reason, or at least a shew of reason. God made Man an understanding Creature, indued with rational Faculties, the understanding to be the leading Faculty, and the will to be the appetite of the Soul, according to reason. Therefore it moves toward such a good as is presented to it by the illightned mind and understanding, as the most adequate and unquestionable object of it. For the freedom and willing consent of the heart is not without rule to order it ; but it is therefore said to be free, because, whether out of a true judgment, it moves one way, or out of a false, another way ; yet, in both, it moves, in a manner, suitable to its own condition. For this reason it is that God condescends so far unto us, in his Word, as to give us so many reasons to hope in him ; that our wills might be drawn theunto, by suitable reasons.

R. 2. From the manner of the Spirits putting forth his efficacy to incline the wills of Believers to hope in God. The heart of man, naturally, is not apt, but averse, hereunto, even when the understanding sees good reasons for it. Therefore the will must necessarily be renewed and changed. This change consists in altering the bent, and inclination of the will ; which the Spirit of God doth, by bringing into the Soul a new Light, and powerful

influence. 1. A new light, whereby we are enabled to see other things, or the same truths in a more spiritual and effectual manner, those impediments being removed, which might hinder the evidence of spiritual Truths, and the judgments being fully convinced, that we might *know things* not only notionally, but practically, *as we ought to know them*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. This is that illumination and revelation, whereof the Scripture speaks, in Eph. 1. 18, 19. 1 Cor. 2. 12. 1 Joh: 5. 20. 2: A powerful influence: Jesus Christ, both opened the understandings of his Disciples, Luke 24. 45. And caused their hearts to burn within them, when he spake unto them, ver. 32. By this powerful influence the spirit makes every faculty and affection of the renewed Soul, to work unto supernatural ends, and objects, according to its proper manner. As the soul, in the Bodily eye, causeth it to see, and, in the ear, causeth it to hear, and, in the tongue, causeth it to speak, &c. So the spirit, in the mind, causeth it to understand aright, and, in every affection, causeth it to move towards Christ and God, in such a manner and way of working, as is suitable to its nature. This the Holy Spirit doth, by creating and implanting indwelling lively spiritual gifts of Grace in the Soul, which thereby sanctifieth and lifteth up unto God in Christ; the faculties and affections, which were by nature set upon the world and sin, and self, being now, by Grace set up-
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on things above, and so are said to be quick-
 ed and made alive unto God. Hence every
 spiritual Gift of Grace, whereby any faculty
 and affection of the Soul is sanctified, is called
 the spirit of that faculty and affection. The
 sanctified disposition of the mind is called, *the*
spirit of a second mind, 2 Tim. 1. 7. The
 gift of Faith is called, *the spirit of Faith*, 2 Cor.
 4. 13. So the gift of Love, and of the Fear of
 the Lord, is called, *the spirit of Love*, 2 Tim. 1.
 7. and *the spirit of the Fear of the Lord*, Isa.
 11. 2. Because the Holy Spirit dwelling in the
 Soul, infuseth those Gifts into it, and so renew-
 eth the faculties and affections, Ps. 51. 10.
 And, 2. Quickneth and exciteth these Spiritual
 Gifts, and by them the faculties and affections
 unto spiritual acts. Without this quickning
 influence those spiritual gifts would be, in the
 Soul, un-acted, as the Bodily senses are, in sleep;
 or as a ship in a calm at Sea, *Acti agimus*. We
 act, but instrumentally, subordinately under
 the spirit, who is the principal efficient and
 agent, in all spiritual good. We act, but not
 in our strength, nor in the strength of Grace
 received, but from the quickning, strengthening
 influence of the Spirit. As Trees, though
 they have in them a seminal vertue, yet,
 except they be helped by influence from
 Heaven, cannot bring forth their fruits; so it
 is with these spiritual *Trees of righteousness*, as
 believers are called, in Isa. 61. 3. *It is God*
that worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his
good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. C 4 Use.

Use. For instruction, threefold : 1. Hence we may learn the true reason, why the sudden resolution of many to reform this and that, and to do this and that particular, are so weak and mutable, *as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, Hos. 6. 4.* which soon vanish. Some, at an heart-searching and Soul-piercing Sermon, are affected as that young man, till they are put upon such conditions, as their predominant lust will not accept, *Mat. 19. 16, 22.* Others, in some strong convictions and awakenings of Conscience, are affected, as *Saul* was for his unrighteous dealings with *David*, and do purpose against it, as he did, yet afterward with him return to their former Sin again, *1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. with 26.* 2. Some, in great sicknesses, others, in great Dangers, by Land, or Sea, resolve that they will become new Men, if God will be pleased to spare them, or deliver them, this time ; of whom the Lord may complain, as he did of the Children of *Israel*, *Judg. 10. 11, 12, 13.* The reason is, because they are unregenerate, they are in their natural state. Such may have a notional light in their minds, and awakenings of their natural Consciences, and stirring in their affections, and sudden purposes towards God, and Christ, and Spiritual things, from a transient work of the Spirit, exciting their innate principle of self love thereunto, for a time ; during which, they are in a better mood, but not in a better state : as in sicknesses, the fits may

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may be altered, yet the sickness remains in its strength. New resolutions, in an un-renewed heart, are like seed in an unsuitable soil, which prospers not, but withers and dies, and comes to nothing at last. How many such are now in Hell; where their remembrance of such fruitless ineffectual purposes gnaweth their Consciences, as a never-dying Worm, and torments them for ever.

2. Hence we may learn, whence it is that true Believers have such firm resolutions of cleaving to God, in Christ, and of Hoping in him, when he hideth his face from them, in great afflictions, *Isa. 8. 17. Jon. 2. 4.* The Reason of it is, because their hearts are purified by Faith, *Acts 15. 9.* which is seated principally in the will, whereby it receiveth Christ, *Joh. 1. 12. Rom. 5. 17. 1 Tim. 15.* and is the effect of the operation of God, *Col. 2. 12.* by his exceeding greatness of Power, *Eph. 1. 19, 20.* whose peculiar glory it is, to perswade the heart, *Gen. 9. 27.* and to draw the will, to come unto Christ, *Joh. 6. 44.* which he doth, by changing the disposition, inclination, and bent of it. If you offer green boughs unto Swine, they regard them not, but trample them under their feet; but if their nature were changed into the nature of sheep, then they would be drawn to them. This is done by the Spirit of God, *2 Cor. 3. 17.* Before Regeneration, the will is in bondage unto Sin, but, being united unto Christ, in regeneration,

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the Son makes us free indeed, *Joh. 8. 36.*

Then the will freely moveth towards God in Christ, by Faith and Hope; as a man, though he cannot give life to himself, being dead, yet, when he is made alive, he can move himself, from a principle of life in him. So much Faith as a man hath, so much free-will he hath to hope in God, in the worst times, so far as his spiritual grace and strength goes, so far he is able, by the concurrence of God's Spirit, which he usually joyns with the ability he hath given to his people, that it may be quickned and actuated thereby. A man cannot act his natural abilities, he cannot move his hand or foot, unless he be assisted with God's general concurrence: So a man can do nothing in Spiritual actions, without special concurrence of Grace in Christ, *Joh. 15. 5.* But being assisted with a supply of the Spirit, proportioned to the exigencies of services to be performed, and of temptations to be resisted, and of corruptions to be mortified, he may say, as Paul did, *Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.*

3. Hence we may learn, in what manner Believers in Christ resolve to hope in God. This resolution in them may be known and distinguished from the resolutions of others, by four Characters or Properties.

1. It is a sanctified Resolution. It is the effect of God's Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and removing far from them vanity and lying,

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ing, *Prov. 30. 8.* that is vain and false apprehensions of things, and turning their whole soul unto God in Christ, to seek all their good in him. This is the effect of converting Grace, as the Prophet shews in *Isa, 17. 7, 8.* *At that day shall a man look to his Maker, &c.*

2. It is an obedient Resolution, in Answer to God's calling them to himself in Christ, *Pf. 27. 8.* It is the yielding up of their wills to be ruled by God's will, *Pf. 110. 3.* When mens wills are not subdued and conformed unto God's will, they are in times of affliction like sullen Birds in a Cage, which beat themselves to death; like peevish froward Children, which will be pleased with nothing, if their wills be crossed in any thing. But when the will is subdued unto God's will, by the spirit, through the Ministry of the Gospel, *2 Cor. 10. 5.* then we can say with *Asaph, It's good for me to draw near to God, Pf. 73. ult.* And, with *David, 2 Sam. 15. 26.* *Let the Lord do with me what seemeth good in his own eyes.*

3. It is a rational resolution, led by the best reasons. For Faith believes in Christ, and in God through Christ, upon God's Authority and Faithfulness and Truth, in his Word and Covenant. Hence it ministreth reasons, to quicken, and strengthen Hope, from God's All-sufficiency and Love in Christ, and Faithfulness in his Promises, to expect and wait upon God for all good from him, suitable to our needs, in the best season; and to resolve, as *Job* did, who

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who said, *though he kill me, yet will I trust in him, Joh. 13. 15.* and (if they see cause to complain) to complain, not of God, but to God, nor of their crosses, but of crossness of their wills to God's holy will; as *Ephraim* did, in *Jer. 31. 18.*

It is a dependent Resolution, relying upon God in Christ, for ability to hope in him, *Isa. 26. 12.* and therefore praying to him, as *David* did, in *Pf. 138. ult.* and to keep it ever in the Papose of their hearts, *1 Chron. 29. 18.* with true self denial of any sufficiency of themselves, so much, as to think any thing, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* Thus they become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, *Eph. 6. 10.*

Lam. 3. 24. Hope in him.

The last thing to be spoken to, is, the Duty resolved upon, illustrated by its object, which is, to exercise *Divine Hope*; for so I call that Hope, which hath God for its object and efficient, who is therefore called *the God of Hope, Rom. 15. 13.* and for its ground, the Word of God, as this Hope hath, *Pf. 119. 49.* The Word in the Original, translated *Hope*, signifieth, *to Expect*, which is the formal act of Hope. Hence we may gather a definition of this divine Hope, It is a lively, spiritual, in-dwelling gift of Grace, whereby Believers are inclined to expect, in and from God, whatever good they want, and he hath promised, 1. For the general Nature of it, which it hath

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in common with other fruits of the Spirit; it is,
 1. A lively gift of Grace, an holy quality, or
 habit, or disposition, freely given of God;
 hereby it is distinguished from that Hope,
 which is meerly a natural affection. For, the
 natural affection of Hope is, by corrupt na-
 ture, set upon a man's self, and earthly things,
 and cannot savour the things of God; and
 therefore is said to be dead. It's an Hope
 that hath given up the Ghost, *Job 11. 10.*
 Natural men are big with Hopes, as they that
 are *wich child*, and are in *pain*, to bring their
 Hopes to the Birth; but instead thereof, they
 bring forth wind. After long looking and hard
 labour, all is but gripe of Wind, like a fit of
 the Chollick, as the Prophet intimates, in *Isa.*
 26. 18. But by this gift of Grace, which I
 call divine Hope, that affection is sanctified,
 and lifted up unto God, and upon him and
 heavenly things, and so quickned and made
 alive unto God. Whence believers are said
 to be *begotten again to a lively Hope*, *1 Pet. 1.*
 3. This gift of Grace I describe further by
 two Properties: 1. *Spiritual*, it is a Spiritual
 Gift, for two Reasons: 1. Because it is created
 and perfected in Believers, *by the power*
of the Holy Spirit, *Rom. 15. 13.* 2. Be-
 cause it makes them *Spiritual* in whom it is
 wrought, *1 Cor. 2. 15.* and fit instruments for
 God's Spiritual Service, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* 2. *In-dwel-*
ling, I call it an in-dwelling Gift: 1. Because
 it abides in all that are in Christ. Union with
 Christ

Christ doth not extinguish it in Believers. Therefore, when Believers are said to be *dead*, in *Col. 3. 3.* it is not meant, in respect of sanctifying Gifts of Grace, inherent in them; as if they were dead, and the faculties and affections of their Souls were immediately acted by the Holy Spirit; but in respect of Sin, they are *dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 6. 11.* 2. Because it is not a transient work upon us, nor abiding in the Holy Ghost, though he abideth in us, (for no created Gifts or qualities abide in him; for whatsoever is in him is himself) but it is wrought, preserved, increased, actuated, and perfected in us by the Holy Ghost, as all other sanctifying inherent Gifts of Grace are. So much for the general nature of this divine Hope. 2. The subjects recipient of it are Believers. For this Hope is grounded on Faith in the Promises, *Gal. 5. 5.* Therefore in the Old Testament, trusting in God, and hoping in God, are promiscuously used in one and the same sense, and in *1 Pet. 3. 15.* Hope is put for Faith. For they both act together inseparably, in supporting the Soul, in times of affliction; yet in their manner of acting, there are some differences between them. For, 1. The adequate object of Faith is the whole Word of God, holding forth good and evil, promises threatnings, blessings and cursings. But the object of Hope is good only. 2. Faith, in its relying upon the Promises, looks to the word

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promising, and to the Authority of God, the promiser; but hope to the good promised, and to the goodness of the promiser. 3. Faith looks to all times, past, present, and to come, and makes future things present, *Psal.* 60. 7.

But Hope looks only at good things, and at those only as future. 4. Faith looks at God, as the first truth; hope relies on God, as the chief Good. 3. The formal act of Hope is expectation. Therefore it is said to *look for him*, in a way of waiting for him, *Isa.* 8. 17. The Greek word ἀποκατάδοξα is well translated, *earnest expectation*, in *Rom.* 8. 19, *Phil.* 1. 20: it being a Metaphor taken from the bodily gestures of those who look for some person or thing, with earnest desire, and assurance, lifting up and putting forth their head, stretching out their neck, fixing their eyes with intention an observation, to shew the strength, firmness, and certainty of this Hope. For the object of this divine Hope is principally God himself, *1 Pet.* 1. 21. and secondarily, all those means, and degrees whereby believers come unto God, ver. 12. unto whom this hope looketh, with waiting upon him for all the good they want, and he hath promised: So that this hope is certain and infallible, being objectated upon God, founded in Faith, and grounded upon the promises of God, who cannot lie, *Tit.* 1. 2. Hence it supporteth the heart, in the worst times.

Doct. Hoping in God aright is a special means of supporting the soul against discouragements, in times of great afflictions. The Scriptures are innumerable which confirm and prove this Truth : And it must be so for these Reasons.

R. 1. From the formal object of divine Hope, which is God himself, in whom alone is to be found all ability and readiness to do good unto those that hope in him, and wait upon him, in such times. 1. All ability to help is in God alone. Princes are of greatest abilities among men, yet we are forbidden to trust in Princes, in whom there is no help, *Pf.* 146. 3. Men commonly think themselves happy in the favour and protection of Princes, but they are deceived. Therefore it is added in verse 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is the Lord his God.* For no Creature hath ability of it self, and whatever ability God hath put into any, yet the Exercise and Success of it depends on God alone. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it : Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain. It is in vain to rise up early, to go to Bed late, to eat the bread of sorrows. So he will give his beloved quiet sleep,* *Pf.* 127. 1, 2. that is, in their resting upon him, building, keeping, giving them bread without Sorrows. Therefore, when men say, they hope for this or that, from such a Creature;

ture, either they mean, they hope to receive it from God, by such a Creature, or it notes, not a divine, but a meer humane hope; or it is not a Christian, but a vain hope. 1. As God only is able, so he is always ready to do good to all those that hope in him. For he is infinite, as well in goodness, as in power. *Thou art good and doest good, Ps. 119. 68.* This David largely shews by sundry instances, in two cases. 1. In deliverances, whereof he notes four Examples, in *Ps. 107.* 1. Of Men wandering in the Wilderness, ver. 2. to 10. 2. Of Prisoners, ver. 10. to 17. 3. Of Persons dangerously sick, ver. 17. to 23. 4. Of Men in great dangers by Storms at Sea, ver. 23. to 33. In all which, he saith, God helps men crying to him, when all help and hope in the Creature fails them. 2. In various changes of Mens outward conditions; in reference, both to the increase of the Fruits of the Earth, or to the diminishing of them, whereby Men become rich or poor, ver. 33. to 36. and to Mens preferment, or abasement, ver. 40, 41. The sum of all is, that, which the Psalmist saith elsewhere, in *Ps. 46.* 1. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Obj. Seeing hope is of things future, and God is a present help; how can it be said, that God is the object of our hope?

Ans. 1 God is, not only a present help; but also a future help, even for ever. And so he is the object both of our faith and hope,
1 Pet.

1 Pet. 1. 21. And. for the future, hope relies upon God, though the soul doth enjoy him, at present, as our God. 1. That he will continue his goodness to us. *This God is our God, and he will be our guide unto death, Ps. 48. ult.* 2. That we shall have a more clear and full sight of him, *Psal. 42. 11.* 3. That he will supply all our need, *Phil. 4. 19.* and that he will multiply grace and peace unto us, 1 Pet. 1. 1. and that, as he is the God of all grace, he will, after we have suffered a while make us perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us, 1 Pet. 5. 10. These future good things hope expects, and 4. at last eternal salvation. Therefore it is called, the hope of Salvation, 1 Thess. 5. 8. the hope of Glory, Rom. 5. 2. and the hope of eternal Life, Tit. 3. 7. all which are good things to come, and though difficult, yet possible to be had, by his help, and are most certain, by vertue of his promise, in Christ, which is the ground of this hope. Hence hope is called an Anchor sure and stedfast, Heb. 6. 19.

R. 2. From God's manner of bringing the soul to this object, himself, together, by this hope. For, 1. By effectual convincing and humbling the soul, he prepares it for this hope. He gives them the valley of Achor for a door of hope, *Hos. 2. 15.* 2. He doth it, by revealing his grace to a soul so prepared. To this end, 1. He openeth the eyes of their understanding, *Eph. 1. 18.* 2. Having given them a

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spiritual eye-light: he lays his grace and goodness in Christ before them, by the Ministry of the Gospel, *Eph.* 3. 9. 3. He particularly applyeth the same to them as theirs, by the Ministry of the Word, *Acts* 13. 26. and by the efficacy of the spirit, *Pf.* 35. 3. So that now they can look upon God, in the Covenant of Grace, as their God, *2 Cor.* 6. 18. and upon all the good of the Covenant, as a legacy given unto them by Christ, in his last Will and Testament, *2 Pet.* 1. 3. Hence what they yet have not, in sense, they see ground to hope for, *Psal.* 130. ult. And this hope supports the Heart under great affliction, upon three main props, 1. The Power of God's Grace: 1. To pardon many and great sins, *Rom.* 5. 20. 2. To perform all his promises, how difficult so ever it may seem to our sense and reason, *Rom.* 4. 18. to 12. 3. To comfort in all Tribulations, *2 Cor.* 1. 3, 4. To help in all distresses, *2 Cor.* 1. 6, 10. 2. Upon the freeness of God's grace and promise, notwithstanding all our unworthiness, *Isa.* 43. 25. *Mich.* 7. 18. 3. Upon the reality of God's good purposes towards us, declared by sending his Son's coming to bring us to God, *Luke* 19. 10. 1. *Pet.* 3. 18. and Christ's calling us unto himself, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. and the Fathers drawing us unto his Son, *Joh.* 6. 44, 45. The relish which Believers have of the sweetness of God's Grace in Christ, turneth the eye of their soul towards him, in desires and expectations, of further good from him, *Psal.* 34. 8. R. 3.

R. 3. From the effects of his hope, all which shew that the soul is supposed by it. 1. It brings comfort to the soul; Therefore *rejoycing* is joyned with this *hope*, *Rom. 12. 12.* There is joy in hope of good to come, though it be yet absent. Because the soul hath a taste of it, in the beginnings, and first fruits. Now joy strengthens the heart answerably to the degree of it. *The joy of God is your strength, Neh. 8. 10.* As when a man seeth the clouds begin to clear, in a time of rain, he is comforted, in hope that it will be fair Weather; so when the soul under great affliction, seeth some glimpse of the light of God's countenance, this hope and joy reviveth, and is encreased, as that is more cleared unto him, *1 Pet. 1. 3. 6.* 2. It quieteth and setteth the Heart in peace proportionably to the measure of our trusting and hoping in God; *Moses* found it so at the Red-sea, *Exod. 14. 13.* and *David*, at Ziklag, *1 Sam. 30. 6.* 3. It makes the heart impatient in waiting on God, with submission to his good pleasure, *Psal. 37. 7.* and *34. 34.* How is God *their strength in the time of trouble?* By strengthening their hope, to wait patiently and quietly upon him, not using any indirect and unlawful means to escape or come out of trouble. The Lord cryed concerning this: *Their strength is to sit still, Isa. 30. 7.* 4. It causeth the soul to cleave unto God, whatever befalls them in the way of obedience, *Rom. 5. 23. Heb. 3. 6.*

Use 1. For reproof of two sorts: 1. All degenerate persons may be hence convinced that their state is wretched and miserable, upon two grounds: 1. Because they have no hope in God, *Eph.* 2. 12. A Christless state is an hopeless state, and an hopeless state is the worst condition. They pretend to this hope, but without ground, and an ungrounded hope is a self-deluding hope. The object of their hope shall fail them, *Mat.* 7. 22. 23. and the hope which they seem to have, shall perish, and be cut off, *Job* 8. 13, 14. It shall be as a spiders web, finely spun, but not firm, its but an hope of their own making, as the spiders web is wrought out of its own bowels; and, as the spider thinks it self, when it is lodged in its web, so they think themselves safe in their false hope; but as the spiders web is easily and suddenly swept away, so shall their hope be by God's beelome, *Isa.* 14. 23. 2. Because they abound in vain hopes, in themselves, *Luke* 18. 19. in men, *Isa.* 2. 22. in riches, *1 Tim.* 6. 17. in chariots and horses, *Pf.* 20. 7. in their mental and bodily abilities, *Prov.* 3. 4. *Jer.* 9. 23, 34. Such hopes argue ignorance, pride, atheism, idolatry, setting up the Creature above God, *Jer.* 2. 12, 13. The effects also are pernicious. 1. Loss, *Jon.* 2. 8. *Phil.* 3. 7. 2. Disappointment, *Jer.* 8. 15. 3. To be ashamed of their hope, *Joh.* 6. 20, *Isa.* 2. 19. and 20. 5. and 30. 5. 4. Great hurt, *Hos.* 12. 1. *Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth the East-wind.*

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The East wind, in those Eastern Countries, was an hot scorching wind, that blasted things, and made them wither, *Gen. 41. 6. Ezek. 17. 10.* As *Pharoah* was to the people of *Israel*, so are all false objects of hope, *the staff of a broken reed, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it, Isa. 36. 6.* Many have found it so, on their death beds, and in Hell for ever. 1. Hence Belivers are to be reprov'd, who do not exercise this hope, but give way to discouragement, in times of affliction. For, 1. hereby they make themselves unfit to perform duties toward God and Men, in a right manner, towards God, in Prayer, and receiving the word and the outward seals of the Covenant, and in thanksgiving and praising God. Towards Men, in an amiableness towards all, and in merciful helpfulness towards the afflicted. 2. They dishonour Religion, by strengthening ignorant and profane Persons, in a false conceit, that Religion is but a melanchollick humour. 3. They weaken themselves and others. Themselves; For, from fainting, comes discouragement, and thence, halting, and from thence an aptness to be turn'd out of the good way; For, take away hope, and you take away all endeavour. Others also, if they be weak, will be offended; and, if they be prejudic'd, will be apt to insult and to twitch such, as *Eliphaz* did *Job*, in *Job 4. 2. to 7.* 4. They give Satan great advantages against themselves, who diligently observeth

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such times, when Christians are under deep despondency of spirit, when they have laid aside their helmet, to wound and weaken them more, he will then ply them with suggestions, to make them to believe any thing against God, and against the Scripture, and against themselves, and to conclude desperate things, to their own hurt.

Obj. This is my case; therefore I never had a right hope in God.

Answ. Thus one discouragement follows upon another, as circles in the water, wherein a stone is cast, which should humble you for neglect of stirring up your hope unto exercise. But yet, let it not discourage you. For true hope is sometimes in a Believer, as in those trees, spoken of in *Isa. 6. 13. Whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves.* It is only winter with you, then life is hid in the root, though no sign of it appears outwardly; that you may learn not to trust in grace received, but in Christ; depending on him to quicken and actuate his own gifts of grace in you, waiting with fervent desires and prayers for the Sun of righteousness to arise upon you, with healing in his wings. In the mean time, remember that Christ himself hath pronounced them blessed, who are poor in spirit, and mourn, are meek, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that he hath promised unto such, that heaven is theirs, they shall be comforted, shall inherit the earth, and shall be

be satisfied. Let such encouragements quicken your hope, and quiet your hearts, that it shall be with you, according to his Word, and that your hope so grounded, shall not make you ashamed.

Use 2. For instruction, in three particulars.

1. How to bring and keep the object and the act, God and this hope together. 2. How to try, whether you hope in God aright, or not. 3. How to exercise this hope, in sundry cases in which you may be called to the practice of it. This instruction is necessary, at all times, and especially, in these times, wherein we may have more necessitous use of this hope, than many do imagine. Therefore I shall the more studiously insist in clearing these particulars, speaking to the first, at this time, with the help of Christ.

1. How to bring and keep the object and act, God and this hope together. The holy Pen-man of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, in Heb. 3. 6. compares the Church of God to an house; saying, *whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence, and rejoycing of hope firm to the end.* As it is in the building of an house, so it must be in the building of this hope. In the building of an house, that it may be strong, and kept strong, three things are necessary: 1. That a strong foundation be well laid. 2. That the house be strongly built upon it. 3. That it be kept in due repair. So it must be, in this great business, whereof we now speak. 1. A strong four-

Foundation of Hope must be well laid. 2. Our Hope must be strongly built upon it. 3. We must be careful that our Hope be continually kept in due Repair. Of these Three we shall speak distinctly, and shall endeavour to shew how they are to be done. 1. For the First, God himself, as he makes himself and his will known unto us, by his written Word, is the only suitable Object, and strong Foundation, or Ground-work of this Hope. Therefore the Church, in my Text saith, *I will hope in him.* For in him alone are the Properties of that Object, on which true Hope must Rely. A Man can be in no condition, wherein he needs help, but there is in God Power and Will to supply it unto him. If comfort be wanting, he is *the God of all comfort*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. He can and will create comforts, for his People, out of nothing; yea, out of the contrary: As he caused at first, *light to shine out of darkness*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Those troubles, temptations, persecutions, and afflictions which threaten destruction, become means of our salvation, by his over-ruling providence, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, Isa. 18. ult. In this Object two principles are to be looked at. 1. A principle of being. 2. A principle of knowing. 1. The principle of being, is God himself, concerning whom, five particulars must be believed, that our hope may be objectated upon him. 1. That God in whom we hope, is an eternal, independant Being or Essence, who giveth being,

and order of being, and power of working unto all things. 2. That in the Being or Essence of God, are three Subsistences or Persons: God, in the first Person, the Father (with the Son and Holy Spirit) decreed the salvation of the Elect, and all things tending thereunto. God, in the second Person, the Son, hath fully and exactly answered that decree, as our surety, in the work of Redemption. God, in the third Person, the Holy Spirit, effectually reveals and applies the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son unto the Elect, in time, and fits them for communion with the Father and the Son, from both whom he proceeds. 3. That Christ, the Mediator, is *Immanuel*, in whom God was reconciling the World unto himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19 who united the two natures of God and man, in his Person, and was thereby fit to bring God and man together, having made man amiable to God, and God amiable to man, who were enemies before, by the sin of man. 4. That God, in Christ, is fatherly towards believers, in all his Attributes, whereby he is described, in *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. and other Texts of Scripture, all which are in God essential, and therefore eternal and infinite. 5. That God acteth all these his excellencies, by his fatherly providence, governing and ordering all this for the good of his people, so powerfully, that Satan and his instruments, in seeking to cross his revealed will, shall and do fulfil his secret will, to their own confusion. This providence ex-

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tends as far as the creation, all things, even the most casual, and most disordered things, thus, and the most free actings of Men are ordered by it, so that God doth sometimes great things by weak means, disabling more likely means, *Eccles. 9, 11.* Sometimes without means, and sometimes crossing the course of means. And when evil is intended, God either wholly averts it, or limits and bounds it, in regard of measure, *Psal. 129. 3, 4.* or of continuance, *Psal. 125. 3.* Hereby also he causeth and ordereth a cessation of actions, that some shall not favour us, and others shall want wisdom and ability to help us, from God's with-drawing his concurrence, who hath sufficient reason, as well not to do what he doth not, as to do what he doth. The right knowledge of God in his Being, is necessary to the well laying the ground-work of this hope, conducing unto the preparatory purposes and uses, 1. To silence all disputes and murmurings: This made *Aaron* hold his peace, *Levit. 10. 2, 3,* And *David* not to open his mouth, *Psal. 39. 9.* 2. To cause the soul to resign up a man's self to the will of God, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will, *Eph. 1. 11.* So it wrought in *Ely*, *1 Sam. 3. 18.* in *David*, *2 Sam. 15. 26.* and in the Saints, *Acts 21. 14.* 3. To quicken us to innure our selves to do God's will, that we may be fit to suffer it: For passive obedience springs from active. Then are mens wills in right order, when, as God is the highest, so his

will hath the highest place in our hearts when they are willing to do what God Commands to Suffer what God inflicts, and to be at God's dispose, when this stayeth our hearts, in all events, that they are in Covenant with him, who sits at the stern, and hath committed all Power to our Redeemer, who hath our names in his Breast-plate, and on his shoulders. The second Principle to be looked at in God, that our hope may be well built on him, is a Principle of knowing. This Principle is the written Word, whereby God makes himself and his will known unto us, without which we have no good ground or warrant to build our hope upon God. But, that his people may thus hope in him with strong encouragement, He gives us his Word, that thereby we may know his good thoughts and purposes towards us, which is a sufficient ground of hope, it being the Word of him that cannot lie; and not only his bare Word, but a binding Word, his Promises, which are free Expressions of his Love, with Encouragement of it unto us; nor only Promises, but his Covenant founded upon a full satisfaction made to his justice, by our Redeemer, as the head of the Covenant; and thereunto hath added his Oath, *Heb. 6. 18.* and Seals, both outward, *Rom. 4. 11.* and inward, *Ephes. 1. 13.* and all this he hath done, that our hope might be built upon a strong foundation, that Believers might be supported in all Tempests, *Isa. 44. 9, 10,*

2. Having such a strong foundation well laid, our next Duty is, to build strongly upon it. Which that you may do, attend to these Directions, 1. See that you trust and hope in God, by Light and Strength received from himself. By divine Light, not by meer humane Reasons, for none can so know God, in his Truth and Goodness, as to trust and hope in him, but by his own Light revealing himself to the Soul, by his Word and Spirit; as none can see the Sun, but by its own Light, *Psal. 36.*

9 2. The divine Power must accompany this Light. For, neither Education, nor Examples of others, nor our own Resolutions, can settle our Hearts upon God, till we find an inward power and authority causing divine truths to shine into our hearts, and subduing all our reasonings, and thoughts into the obedience of Faith: only that soul, which hath found the efficacy of the Spirit, by the Word, in casting it down, and raising it up, and renewing it, can hope in God aright for things of God; then, and not before, the sweetness of God's Love is let into the Soul, and relished by it, which draweth the whole Soul to trust and hope in him, *Pf. 9. 10.*

2. Suit the Promises to your several conditions. For, whatever conditions of life any Believer is or can be in, he hath Promises in the Word suitable to it; whether present, or possible. 1. At present, whatever difficulties or impossibilities, as to second causes, and means

appear to sense, or reason, Faith lifteth up the Soul above them all, to look unto the Promises and Power of God, and thereby quickeneth and strengtheneth our hope in him, *Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21. Heb. 11. 27.* 2. Possible, The Saints have found great help to their Faith and Hope, by putting cases, and answering their own hearts therein from God's all-sufficiency. So David, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear none evil; for thou art with me, Ps. 23. 4.* Again, *Though an Host should encamp against me, my heart should not fear, Ps. 27. 3.* Again, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea, though the Waters thereof roar, Ps. 46. 1, 2, 3.* Paul excellently puts other cases, of an higher nature than these, and triumphs over them all, in the unchangeableness of God's Love to Believers in Christ, *Rom. 8. 38, 39.*

3. When your hope is quickned, by the Promises, look unto God with a single eye, trusting and hoping in him alone. To trust upon two props, of which one is sound, the other rotten, is the ready way to fail. Make use of all helps, which God gives you, but hope in him alone. For hoping in God is a part of that natural Worship of God, enjoyned in the first Commandment, which belongs to God alone, *Mat. 4. 20.* and thus to have
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our eyes towards God alone is the proper effect of true Conversion, *Isa.* 17. 7, 8.

4. See that the disposition of your spirits be answerable to the Relations you have to God, when he becomes your portion, and the object of your hope. He hath, 1. The Relation of a faithful Creator, and the disposition in you that must suit that, is, to commit your Souls to him in well-doing, *1 Pet.* 4. 19. in the want of means. 2. The Relation of a Father, and the disposition in you that suits thereto, is, to cast your care upon him, believing that he careth for you, *1 Pet.* 5. 7. *Mat.* 6. 32. 3. The Relation of an Husband, the disposition that suits that, is, foederal faithfulness, *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. *2 Cor.* 11. 2, 3. 4. The Relation of a Guide and Teacher, the disposition suitable to that, is, to yield up your selves in all things to be guided by his counsel, as *Asaph* did, *Pf.* 73. 24. 5. The Relations of your Judge, Law-giver, and King, *Isa.* 33. 22. The disposition which answers those Relations, is obedience to God's Commands, and walking in his Ways. Else you do not trust in him, but tempt him, *Mat.* 4. 7. You may expect God, in his ways of Mercy, when you keep in your way of Obedience. Then you may, with comfort, expect whatever good those Relations can yield, from the All-sufficient God, who regarding more our weakness than his own greatness, condescendeth so low as to take upon himself such Relations, for the strengthening our hope in him.

5. Often call to mind former experiences, both of your selves and others. *Experience worketh hope, Rom. 5. 4.* 1. Of others *Pf. 22. 4.* and thence infer, as *David* did, *Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that put their trust in thee, Pf. 9. 10.* 2. Of your selves, *2 Cor. 1. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.* Christians should be ready to communicate their own Experiences to others, as *David* did in *Pf. 66. 16.* Thus the Word will be as Silver seven times tried, *Pf. 12. 6.*

6. Rest not in your hoping in God, as it is an act done, or a grace exercised by you. For hoping is but the act of a Creature, and the gift of hope it self it but a created gift, and to hope in any Creature, is to make that Creature an Idol. But to depend upon God to quicken and strengthen your hope in himself alone, who is called, *the hope of Israel, Jer. 14. 6.* and by his help, through the promise, to trust and hope in him the Promiser, who gives Promises, and can create Performances, (so that if you close with the Promise, as good, you may close with the Promiser as better, who both speaks what he means, and will perform what he speaks;) this is to build your hope strongly upon God.

3. That you may keep this hope in repair:
1. See that your hoping in God be a continued act, frequently renewed upon every new occasion, not only in adversity, but also in prosperity, as well in enjoyments as wants. For we have

have the use of hoping in God for the continuance of the good we have, and for his blessing to be continued to us in it. 2. Observe what breaches are made in your hope, from day to day; whether from within, by corruptions, or from without, by temptation? You will find that the main breaches are either from false Principles, or from doubts of true Principles, or from inadvertency, and mindlessness of them. Thence the soul is as sheep that are driven from mountain to hill, and have forgotten their resting place, *Jer. 50. 6.* 3. Having found out the impediments of your hoping in God, stir up your selves, as *David* did, saying, *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul, Ps. 116. 7.* by stirring up this gift of God in you, *2 Tim. 1. 6.* To this end, 1. See that your judgments be right. 2. Beware of those things that are opposite to this hope, and cast them off, *Heb. 12. 1, 2.* where every thing that bows the Soul downward is compared to a weight; and loose affections, and false reasonings, are compared to a long loose garment, which easily besets the feet, and will hinder a runner in a race, if it be not laid aside, or girt up, 3. Speak to your own heart, as you would speak to another, in a like case. 4. Joyn Prayer with your use of other means, *Rom. 15. 13.* 5. According to God's order of promising, do you proceed to quicken and strengthen your Faith and Hope in him. 1. He promiseth that he will be your God, so let your Faith look at him,

him, in Christ, and let your hope expect that he will be so to you, for the future, and for ever, *Pf. 48. ult.* 2. He promiseth that he will forgive all sins unto repentant Believers: therfore renew your repentance and faith in the blood of Christ daily, and then hope in him, and pray that he will make you to hear joy and gladness, and restore to you the joy of his salvation, as *David* did, *Pf. 51. 8, 12.* 3. He hath promised that he will sanctifie, and heal his people: therefore hope in him, and pray to him for it, as *David* did, in *Pf. 138. ult.* 4. He hath promised that he will give that inheritance in Heaven unto all that are sanctified by Faith in Christ: therefore wait for it in hope, *Rom. 8. 23, 24.* and let this hope comfort and strengthen your hearts in all the sufferings of this life, 2. *Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18.* 5. He hath promised that he will give all things needful for this life, till we come thither, *Pf. 84. 11.* therefore hope in him for daily bread, and for all things you need. For as the same Love of God moved him to save his Elect for ever, and to provide for them in this World, till they be put into possession of that Salvation; so the same hope relyeth upon God, both for Heaven hereafter, and for all necessary supplies ill we come thither. Thus we have endeavoured to instruct you, in this first point, how to bring the act and object, God and this hope, together, that you may hope in him, which you see is a matter

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ter of great importance, and necessary to be understood practically, that we may hope in God aright.

The second Instruction is, to teach men how to try whether their hoping in God, which they pretend, is right, or not. The danger is very great, if you be deceived herein, yet many are deceived, through want of light to discern the difference between the natural affection of hope, and this spiritual gift of hope in God. This divine hope, whereof we now speak, may be known by three Characters.

1. By the Ground of it. 2. By the formal act of it. 3. By the proper effect of it.

1. By the ground of it. If it be rightly grounded, it is the right hope. The ground of this hope is faith, *Heb. 11. 1.* which hath a double object. 1. God in Christ. 2. The Word of God. That you may try and examine your hope, whether it be thus grounded or not; we shall insist some what more largely in this, and be more brief in the two following Characters, which will be more easily apprehended, after this is cleared.

1. Hope is rightly grounded, when it is grounded or bottomed upon Faith, receiving Christ, and applying to our selves, in him, God as our God, and portion, in the Covenant of Grace. It is the office and work of Faith, to appropriate God in Christ, to a Man's self. The voice of Christ unto Believers, is *My Father is your Father, and my God your God,*
John

Jo n 20. 17. And the voice of Faith, in a Believer, to Christ, is, *My Lord and my God*, ver. 28. 29. God absolutely considered, out of Christ, is an object of the greatest terrour unto Sinners. *Isa. 33. 14.* But God, relatively considered, in Christ, as our God and portion, is the chiefest object of our hope, and love. Faith cleaveth unto God, as our God and portion. And, when we know that God is our portion, and thereupon hope in him, then our hoping in God is right, because it is rightly grounded. Our having God for our portion, begins at our entring into Covenant with him. For then, and not before, we have a property in God, and he in us, *Ezek. 15. 8.* This property in God, is given and manifested to us, by degrees. 1. The soul is convinced of the vanity and insufficiency of all other things, to be our portion, and so is made willing to forsake them all, that it may injoy God, as his portion, Till this be done, Men *observe lying vanities, and forsake their own Mercy, John 2. 8, 9.* 2. The Soul is convinced that God is the God of some, by a peculiar right, *Pf. 4. 3.* These he accounts the only happy men in the World, *Pf. 144. ult.* 3. Hence arise fervent desires that God would be so to him, in particular. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour of thy People, Pf. 106. 4. 4.* The soul is quickned, by the spirit of Faith, to turn unto the Lord with true repentance, and to put it self upon God's mercy in Christ, and to wait upon him for the

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discovery of his love to him, *Joel* 2. 13, 14.
 5. God having thus far brought the soul to-
 wards himself, doth, in his own time, manifest
 to us that he is our God, whence the Soul
 actually closeth with him, by Faith, in Christ,
 as our portion, *Hos.* 2. 13. *Pf.* 73. 25. 6;
 Hereupon we come to hope in him, for what-
 ever good we need, and he hath promised, *Pf.*
 147. 11. And as Faith groweth more towards
 full assurance, so hope groweth more strong,
 in spiritual security, and courage, and glorying
 in God, *Pf.* 48. ult. yet in the darkest times,
 Faith inables the soul, from its former taste
 of Gods goodness, to claim an interest in him
 still. Doubtless, thou art our Father, &c. *Isa.*
 63. 16. With an expectation of future good
 from him, *Pf.* 42. 11. Yea, when experience
 and sense fails, by reason of our inadvertency,
 yet so much vertue of former sense remains, as to
 inable the soul, even when it is in darkness, and
 seeth no light, to trust in the name of the Lord,
 and stay it self upon his God. *Isa.* 50. 10. and
 to wait upon the Lord, even when he hideth his
 face from us, and to look for him, *Isa.* 8. 17.
 But, if any desire to know how they may
 clearly discern that their hope is grounded on
 faith in God, as their God and portion in
 Christ; I answer, you may know it by Gods
 influence, in a believing soul, whereby this
 hope is quickned, and strengthened. For, when
 God becomes any ones portion, he becomes a
 fountain of blessings to that person, God, our

own God, shall bless us, *Pf. 67. 6.* He is a Sun
and a Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory.
No good thing will be withhold from them, *Pf. 84.*

11. Especially, of spiritual blessings, which the
Apostles, in their salutations, comprehended in
two things, grace, and peace. God as our God,
in Christ, is the God of both to his people.
He is the God of all grace. *1 Pet. 5. 10.* and the
God of peace, *Heb. 13. 20.* That is, he influ-
enceth believers with all those graces, which
breed peace and quietness in their sou's, suppor-
ting them under all burthens of temptations,
troubles, wants, imperfections, till they come
to enoy perfect rest in God himself, and fitting
them, in the mean time, more and more, for
all that good, which they want, in themselves,
and he hath prepared for them, in Christ. For,
1. God, as our portion, is the God of love; yea,
love it self, *1 John 4. 8.* and a taste of
his love is better than wine, *Cant. 1. 3.*
so full of spirit that it will revive a droop-
ping, sinking, dying soul, and quicken all
graces in it, and make any condition comfor-
table, any affliction tollerable, and strength-
en it to wait for the more full communion
with God, in the use of the most difficult
means as *Jacobs* love to *Rachel*, mabled him to
wait for her seven years, in an hard service,
and they seemed to him but a few days, *Gen.*
29. 20. 2. God as our portion in Christ, is the
God of hope *Rom. 15. 13.* whereby, as by an
Anchor, he stayeth and fixeth the soul upon
himself:

himself : as a Ship at Anchor, though it may be moved, and tossed, yet it is not removed from its place and station, so, if you find that your soul cleaveth to God, in Christ, and will not be driven from him, whatever troubles, or temptations befall you ; your hope in him is right. This *Asaph* found, in *Pf* 73 ult. 3. God, as our God and portion, is the God of patience, *Rom* 15. 5. whereby believers resign up themselves to his dispose, humbly submitting their wills to his. If you find it so ; your hope is right. *David* found it so ; 1 *Sam* 30. 6. 4. God, as our portion, is the Father of Spirits, *Heb* 12. 9. which he so governs, and meekens, that, though we be sensible of afflictions, he keeps our spirits from discontentment and murmuring, in a quiet frame. Hereby also you may know that your hope is right. The Church found it so, in *Mich* 7. 9. 5. God as our portion, is God all sufficient, *Gen* 17. 11. whence he gives us contentment, in all estates, 1 *Tim* 6. 6. If you find it so, your hope is right. *Paul* found it so, *Phil* 4. 11, 12. 6. God, as our portion, is the God of all comfort, 2 *Cor* 1. 4. who, by letting the light of his countenance into the soul, maketh it lightsome. His joy strengthens the soul, *Neb* 8. 6. against inordinate fears of wants, *Psal* 23. 1. or of dangers, ver. 4. and under sense of afflictions, *Rom* 5. 2, 3. and oppositions, *Mich* 7. 7. and temptations, 2 *Cor* 12. 9, 10. and in all events, *Rom* 8. 38. 9. Not, that every believer attains to

to such high actings of Faith and hope ; yet, if it prevail to cause them to trust in him, and stay themselves upon him, in the dark, it is a right hope, *Isa. 50. 10.*

2. Hope is rightly grounded, when it is bottomed upon the Word, and promises of God believed in. In the first conversion, when the soul had nothing, but the bare promise of free mercy in Christ, to look at, God did thereby cause us to trust and hope in him, *Pf. 119. 49.* without former experiences. In like manner he worketh in believers, in dark times, when they cannot recall former experiences, and want present sense of Gods love, God quickeneth his people, by quickening theirs, in looking to the naked promise, *Pf. 119. 50.* and thereby their hope also, *Isa. 8. 17.* Hence Jacob became such a mighty wrestler with God, *Gen. 32.* with *Hos. 12. 4.* God is ever mindful of his Covenant, *Pf. 111. 5.* and faithful in his Promises, *1 Thes. 5. 24.* Hope looks at the good of the Promise, and the goodness of the Promiser, for that part of the Promise, which is not yet performed, as Faith looks at the truth of the promise, and faithfulness of the Promiser. Now, that hope thus grounded, is a right hope, may be proved ; because, when Faith in the promises quickeneth and strengtheneth hope in believers, then Gods ends are attained, for which he giveth promises. His ends are these, and the like : 1. To make known unto his people his good thoughts, and purposes concerning

cerning them, *Jer.* 29. 10. This he doth, to encourage them to hope for a good end, and to endeavour, in the use of good means, to attain it, *verse* 11. 12. 2. To draw the Elect unto Christ, in whom all Gods promises are, Yea, and Amen. *2 Cor.* 1. 20. 3. To shew what credit God hath in the Hearts of his People, *John* 3. 33. 2 *John* 5. 9, 10. 4. To let believers see that they are richer, in their lowest estate, than others are in their greatest worldly possessions. For they have God himself, for their portion, when others have but his gifts, *Pf.* 4. 7. They have Christ, and *unsearchable riches* in him *Eph.* 3. 8. who became poor, *that by his poverty we might be made rich*, *2 Cor.* 8. 9. They have spiritual riches, *Rev.* 2. 9. They are rich in Faith, *Lam.* 2. 5. whereas, others have only their bellies filled, *Pf.* 17. 14. Believers have a large estate in Promises, *1 Tim.* 4. 8. Which are Gods bills, and bonds and deeds of gift, *for a great while to come*, *2 Sam.* 7. 19. They have much in possession, and much more in hope, *1 Pet.* 1. 3. so that when we hope in his word, God attaineth his end, in giving his word. Therefore hope grounded on the word, is a right hope.

2. By the formal act of hope, you may try, whether it is right or not. Expectation is the formal act of hope. This expectation hath 3 properties: 1. It's earnest, *Phil.* 1. 20. 2. It's patient, *Rom.* 8. 25. Patient, 1. Of Labouring, 2. Of Suffering. 3. Of Waiting. Because between

between hoping and having, there is a want of the thing desired and promised, till Gods time for performing comes. This delay is troublesome, *Prov.* 13. 12. Therefore we have need of patience, *Heb.* 10. 35. The Husband-man soweth in hope, and waits with patience for the precious fruits of the earth, *James* 5. 7. which the Apostle there applies to believers. With continuance, *Job* 14. 14. Such waiting on God, gives him the glory of his independency, all-sufficiency, immutability, goodness, faithfulness, and wisdom, it hath great blessings annexed to it, *Prov.* 8. 34. 35. *Isa* 30. 18. *Isa* 40. 31. The contrary is a compound of many sins, of pride, and impatience, *Psf.* 78. 41. and discontent, *2 Kings*, 6. 33. and unbelief. *Isa* 28. 16.

3. By the proper effect of this hope, you may know, it be right; love flowereth from Faith and Hope, *1 Cor.* 13. ult. especially, to God, in Christ, in whom we hope. Hence he *that hath this hope, purgeth himself as Christ is pure*, *1 John* 3. 3. and is diligent in using all God's means, with avoiding the contrary, *Heb.* 10. 22. to 26. with dependance upon God, and trusting in him alone, not in our abilities, *1 Sam.* 3. 9. *Prov.* 3. 5, 6. or graces, which gave Peter two falls, nor in our performances, *Psf.* 127. 1, 2. nor in the means themselves, *Hest.* 4. 14, 16.

Thus you see what are the characters of hoping in God aright: If upon tryal, you find them

want of them to be in you, in truth; that hope will not make you ashamed; but you shall have cause to say, with the Church, in *Is. 25. 9.* *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us, &c.*

The third Instruction is, How to exercise hope in God aright, in sundry cases, wherein you are called to practice it. These cases are of two sorts. 1. Such as concern Men's private conditions. 2. Such as concern the publick. The first sort of cases, which concern the private conditions of Believers, are either for the present, or for the time past, or for the time to come. We shall shew how this hope is to be exercised, in these concerns, severally, and distinctly, with God's assistance.

1. For the time present, when Believers are under excessive grief, whatever is the cause of it; whether sin or affliction, in your persons, or relations. Believers, as well as others, are subject to many afflictions, in this life, *Ps. 34. 19.* *Many are the afflictions of the Righteous,* and, not of some kind only, but of divers kinds. *Job* saith of every one, *his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn, Job 14. ult.* Herein two things are to be cleared. 1. That it is our Duty to grieve under affliction, proportionately to the cause. It is dolency, stupidity, not to grieve for afflictions. *Jer. 5. 3.* It is therefore our Duty to grieve, when God afflicteth us, but more for God's displeasure apprehended therein.

in. 2. It is our duty to grieve more for sin than for affliction. 3. More for sin in ourselves than in others. And, 4. For sin in our near Relations more than in others more remote; yet it is unlawful to let grief exceed the proportion allowed by the rules of God's Word, as all do, who have not this hope, *Thess* 4. 13. The spirit of man is by corrupt nature *unstable as water*, *Gen.* 49. 4. always running forth, unless (as water is bounded by the bank or vessel into which it is put, so) our spirits be bounded and kept within Compass by the spirit of God. Would you know when grief exceeds; or is immoderate? You may know it by the effects. 1. If it distempers and hurts the Body. Godly sorrow, as such, hurts no man, it is healing to the soul, and not hurtful to the body, unless, by accident, the body being before under painful distemper, which is apt to be increased by any grief. *Worldly sorrow causeth Death*, *2 Cor.* 7. 10. Worldly sorrow is, not only that which is for Worldly things, but also that which is for sin, upon worldly respects, as the principal motives of it. And that sorrow hurts the body, and doth no good to the soul, as *David* found, when it prevailed in his spirit, *Psf.* 32. 2, 3, 4. 2. If it hinders you from, or in, the performance of any duty. 1. From it. The good Thief on the Cross was in great grief; yet that did not hinder him from honouring Christ, nor from minding his own salvation, nor from rebu-

rebuking his fellow, *Luke* 23. 39. to 43. Nor did Christ's sorrow on the Cross, which was far greater than that Thief's, take him off from minding the future good of his Mother, *John* 19. 26. 2. In Duty. It turned *David's* praying, wherein he should have exercised Repentance, out of Love unto God, into roaring, out of inordinate self-love, *Pf.* 32. 3. and it hindered the *Israelites* in hearing *Moses*, when he spake most comfortably to them, from receiving comfort thereby, *Exod.* 6. 9. It is with the soul in this case as it is with the body. When Physick works upon the right humour, it carries away that which distempers without hurting the body. But, if it only exasperates the distemper, and removes not the cause; it doth hurt. 3. If your minds are so fixed upon a particular grievance that you cannot be duly thankful for other mercies, nor take comfort in them; like froward Children, that being crossed in one thing, throw away all the rest. For this *Joab* justly blamed *David*, though he erred in the manner, because he wept excessively for the death of *Absalom*, and did not rejoyce in the victory, and give thanks to God for it, *2 Sam.* 19. 1. to 8. 4. If it inclines the will to seek ease and comfort, in some unwarrantable, and unsafe way. This is called halting, whereby men are turned out of the way, *Heb.* 12. 12, 13. 5. If the Soul sinks, and faints under it, is wholly subdued by it, so as it cannot bear up it self. This is one of the

the extreame which Wisdom forbids all his Children to fall into, and which to forget is sin, *Heb. 12. 5.*

Now the Exercise of a right hoping in God is of necessary use, in this case, to moderate sorrow, and to keep it within due bounds. This it doth, especially two ways. 1. By striking at the root, and weakening the cause of it. 1. If it be for the outward losses and crosses, hoping in God raiseth up the Soul by looking up to God, and seeing that they are, either from him, as our God in Covenant. Thus it raised up *Job*, *Job 1. 21.* and *David*, *1 Sam. 30. 6.* or that they are for God, and for their witness-bearing to his truth. This enabled the Saints of old, to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better, and an enduring substance, *Heb. 10. 34.* 2. If it be from loss of dear Relations, and God's displeasure apprehended therein; this hope will quicken in you Godly sorrow, and endeavours to seek reconciliation and peace with God, by Repentance and Faith in Christ, *Hos. 6. 1.* 2. It will purge out inordinate affections to the Creatures, *1 John 3. 3.* over-grieving for the loss of Creature-comforts ariseth from over-joying in Creature-contentments. 3. If it be from bodily weakness, or Sicknes, or pain, or any dislemper, that renders a man unserviceable in his place; this hope, being rightly exercised, will moderate that sorrow. 1. By bring-

bringing a spiritual light into the Soul, to
 prepare it to receive comfort. For the body
 compared to an house, and to a garment.
 Hence they can argue, *a pari*, the more worn
 and tattered the garment is, the sooner we
 shall have a new one, So it is with the Soul,
Cor. 15. 42, 43, 44. And the more crazy
 and weak the house, or rather the prison, is,
 the nearer the prisoner is to be delivered from
 it. So it is with the Soul imprisoned in this
 earthly house of the body, *2 Cor. 5. 1, &c.*
 By quickening us unto those duties which
 such a condition calls for, *viz.* Patience, passive
 Obedience, Quietness, Contentedness, Prayer,
&c. Ps. 39. 9, 10. 4. If it be from sin, in our
 selves, or others, or in our families and near
 relations; this hope will be of necessary use to
 keep the soul from being swallowed up with
 over much sorrow. He that grieves for sin,
 must grieve in hope. For a vexing, discour-
 aging, despairing grief will do no good, but
 much hurt, as you may see in *Jer. 18. 12.* and
Ezek. 33. 10, 11. But that sorrow for sin
 which is accompanied with hope of mercy,
 quickeneth to Prayer of Faith, *Job 7. 20.*
 and to reformation, *Ezra 10. 2, 3.* 5. If it
 be from an apprehension that God is your E-
 nemy, and fighteth against you, as he is and
 doth sometimes, *Isa. 63. 10.* this hope is of
 necessary use; whether your apprehension be
 right, or wrong. If it be so indeed, it will
 quicken you to make all speed to be reconciled
 unto

unto God in Christ. Hereunto this hope encourageth. 1. From the mercy and grace of God, in forgiving repenting sinners, *Pf. 130* 4. 2. From his willingness to deal so with you, declared sundry ways. 1. By sending his Son to make attonement for lost sinners. 2. By sending his Embassadors to beseech you to be reconciled unto him, *2 Cor. 5. 19, 20*. 3. By his never refusing Rebels, that sought his favour in Christ, upon Gospel terms. 4. By his commanding us to forgive such as repent, though they have sinned against us unto seventy times seven times; and himself will not be behind us in mercy and kindness. 2. But if it be not so indeed, if God be not our Enemy, this hope will awe the soul from wronging God, by our misapprehensions. It is an injury to a man, that is our friend, and hath approved himself so to be, by many kindnesses, if we should charge him with enmity, and say to him, you do not love me, you hate me, you are mine enemy, when you cannot prove it. Hoping in God will arm the soul against such conclusions, by former experiences of sundry effects of God's favour towards you, in pardoning some sins, subduing some lusts, healing some distempers, scattering some temptations, working some spiritual good in you; as, faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the Saints, granting some Prayers. Say not, I know not, whether God hath done thus, in mercy and favour toward me, and whether

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he will continue them unto me, or not ; for these are Covenant mercies, and therefore sure mercies, even *the sure mercies of David*, *Isa. 55. 3.* Every answer of Prayer, every gift of Grace, that makes the more prayerful, humble, watchful, thankful, serviceable, to God and Man, that leads the soul to God, in Christ, is from the fatherly goodness and love to thee in Christ, Say not, if God were my Father, I should see his face, but he hides his face from me ; for that doth not always follow. Sometimes Children are infants, and know not their Father. Sometimes grown Children see not their Father, many years together, yet rest in his fatherly love and care for them. So God will have his stronger Children many times, *to walk by Faith and not by Love*, *1 Cor. 5. 7.* Sometimes the Child, being forth at School, or at Prenticeship, desireth earnestly to come home and see his Father, but the father sees it to be inexpedient, at that time, to grant his request. But he will send him a Letter, a Token, a Messenger, or some Friend to visit him, he shall see him, in them, not in his person. So God deals, many times, with his Children, who desire to see his face, to have sensible Demonstrations of his favour and love to them. They shall see him, in his Letters, the Scripture, and the Promises, or in some token of his Love, some *strength in their souls*, *Pf. 138. 3.* or some *messenger*, *Job 33. 23.* whom he sends to comfort them, and

his Spirit to quicken and strengthen them to wait upon him.

Object. But where the Spirit is, there are the fruits of the Spirit, and among the rest joy, *Gal. 5. 22.* which I want.

Ans. 1. Take a Believer at the worst, he hath that joy which he would not part with, in exchange, for the jocundness of worldly Men. 2. He hath true joy through faith, even when he is *in heaviness, for a time*, 1 *Pet. 1. 8.* he hath it in the root, when it doth not sprout forth in leaves, because it is winter with him. He who desires spiritual joy, and grieves for the want of it, hath true joy in some degree; as that man, from faith, bewailed his unbelief, *Mark 9. 24.*

The second way, whereby this hope boundeth, and moderateth sorrow, is, by strengthening the soul to stick to right grounds of true comfort, to maintain their joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, as their portion, not yielding up their purse to every thief, nor suffering themselves to be wrangled out of their right, in it. If excessive sorrow begins to seize upon the soul of a believer; this hope will 1. Quicken him to examine its commission, by parting with his soul, and enquiring whether there be good reason, a sufficient cause for it, or not, as *David* did in *Pf. 42. 5. 11.* and *43. 5.* *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, &c.* For sometimes your sorrow is causeless, and groundless, and commonly it is so: 1. When

it is boundless. For reason will set bounds unto grief, but mistakes, and misapprehensions, know no bounds. 2. When it is plealess, being tryed at the bar of right reason, or of the judgment of those who are godly wise. *Job* in a passion, challenged God himself to dispute, and gives him his choice, whether he will oppose, or answer, he will be for him, and fill his mouth with Arguments, and doubts not that he shall carry the cause. But, when God appeared, and spake to him, *Jobs* passion vanished, and his courage failed, and he confessed that he had spoken foolishly, and would now lay his hand upon his mouth. Compare *Job* 23. 3. 4. 5. with *Chap.* 40. 4. 5. and *Chap.* 42. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Sometimes a dejected, discouraged Christian thinks he hath so much to say, against his comfort, as will put to silence the best and ablest Ministers. But when any judicious Minister, or experienced Christian, comes to him, he hath either nothing to say, or nothing of weight, but what is full of error and mistakes. Say therefore to your selves, in this case, as God did to *Jonah*, *Dost thou well to be angry?* Do I well to be thus dejected? 2. If there be cause for sorrow: 1. Examine whether it be sufficient to justifie such a measure, or degree of sorrow, or not. That sorrow, which drives the soul from God, which indisposeth it to prayer, thanksgiving to the duties of his calling, to works of mercy and love, that makes him lumpish, harsh, passionate, that sowres and

distempers his spirit, is excessive and immoderate. 2. Examine from what Topicks the Arguments are fetched, that are used to justify such a degree of sorrow. The soul of man should not be subjected to sense and feeling, or to any way of reasoning, but that which is from and according to the word of God. To argue, that you have no Faith, because you are full of doubting, that you have no grace, because you have strong corruptions, is to offend against the generation of Gods children, *Pf. 73. 15.* the vanity whereof *Asaph* saw, when he went into the Sanctuary of God. So will you, if you consult the Scriptures. 3. Fly to the God of comfort, 2. *Cor. 1. 3.* First issue that great question, Am I Gods Child, or not? If not, rest not in that state, but hasten out of it. If yea, and thou art so, if thou hast his Image; then set faith on work: 1. Upon Gods all-sufficiency, and fetch all from Heaven, which thou wantest on earth. 2. Upon his Efficiency: 1. Recal to mind what he hath done for thee in times past, as *Asaph* did, in *Pf. 77. 5. 6.* 2. For the future, rest on his bare word, and promise, which shews what he will do. Account that to be thine, which thou hast in grant, by the promise, as *David* did, *Pf. 60. 7.* God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce, &c. *Gilead* is mine, &c. Thus apply what Christ saith, in *Mat. 5. 3, 4, 5.* and the Scripture every where. 3. For the present: consider what God doth for thee. Doth he support thee,

that

that thou sinkest not under despair? Doth he keep thee in patience, and submission to his will, by hope? Doth he quicken thee to use all good means, with waiting upon him? Give him the glory of his grace, and be encouraged to spread before him in prayer, all thy doubts, thy fears, thy temptations, and wants, *Phil. 4. 6.* and with Prayer, joyn hoping in him, and waiting on him. Say, There is mercy in him, to pity; and power in him to help; though I find no comfort, yet I hope I shall; though my prayers be not yet answered; I hope they will be, in the best season, and I will wait on God, till he doth answer them. If yet comfort come not; improve the communion of Saints, and the publick Ordinances, as *David, I will hearken what God the Lord will speak. Ps. 85. 8.* use men and means, but let your hope be fixed upon God only, look to him for comfort, *who creates the fruits of the lips, peace, Isa. 57. 9.* use the communion of the Saints, in private also; but so, as waiting for his manifesting himself to your soul, as the Church found he did, in *Can. 5. 8.* and *6. 3.* And, if thou canst not find out what particular hinders thy comfort, do as men use to do for their bodies, when the distemper is general, who make an issue, to draw the matter to some head; pitch upon some particular sin, to which thou art most subject, by natural inclination, or by thy calling, or company, or the condition of the times, and let out the corruption that may begin repentance there,

and joyn with it faith in the blood of Christ, and to seek reconciliation with God, and comfort thereby. In thus doing, wait on God, till he satisfy thy thirsty soul, who hath promised that *they, who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up upon wings, as Eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint, Isa. 40. 31.*

The second case, whereon believers are called to exercise this hope, in their personal concerns, is, in reference to the time past. the seeming frustration and disappointment of their former expectations. For, having prayed and waited for the good desired, yet they have not obtained it. And many, when they have given up their names to Christ, looked for peace, prosperity, and good days, but find troubles, crosses and afflictions, of sundry kinds; this much disquieteth, & sometimes discourageth their spirits. Hence they are apt to complain, with the Church, in *Jer. 8. 15. We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble; and to conclude, as they did, in Isa. 49. 14. Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* In this case, that may be made for a right ex-

cercise of hoping, in God, I shall distinguish the subjects of it. 1. There are some, whom God forsakes really. 1. Such as forsake God. *If ye forsake him, he will*

Quosdam deserat; quosdam deserere videtur. Amb. in Psal. 118.

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Will forsake you, 2 Chron. 15. 2. This is the condition of all Apostates, that depart from the rules of Gods worship, and the Churches of the Saints, embracing and following worldly pollicies, and advantages. 2. Such as seem to seek God, but rest in outward performances, without inward sincerity, and spiritualness, and trust in their parts and gifts, and duties, not in Christ, for acceptance with God. This is the condition of all Hypocrites, who sin and pray, and pray and sin, without true repentance, yet think to be accepted of God, for the things they do in religion outwardly, of such the Lord saith, in *Hos. 5, 6.* *They shall go with their flocks, and herds, to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him, he hath withdrawn himself from them.* 3. Such as abuse the mercies they have received, and yet presume that mercies shall be still continued and added, though they go on in their impenitency. This is the condition of all obstinate, hard hearted sinners. These may receive their doom, from that which the Lord denounced against *Israel*, in *Hos. 1. 6.* *Call her name Lo-rubama; for I will not add any more, to shew mercy to them.* As if he had said, They have received many mercies from me, but they abuse them all, and presume they shall receive more mercies from me : but it shall not be so. I will not add any more. Of all these, and the like, the Apostle saith, they are *without Christ, without God, and without hope, Eph. 2. 12.* therefore I have no

more to say to them in this point. 2. There are others whom God doth not forsake really, but only seemingly, and that, but in some respect, and, but for a time. And that he is present with them graciously, when they think he hath forsaken them, appeareth by his Efficacy in them. 1. That he quickens them to seek him in the use of all means, *Pf. 9. 10. For thou Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* 2. That they seek him, as their portion, as their chief good, without injoyment of whom, nothing will satisfy them. This is from the efficacy of his grace in them, as it was in the Spouse, *Cant. 5. 4, 5, 6. 8. 10.* 3. That Gods withdrawing from them, in any degree, makes them fearful of his forsaking them utterly, and for prevention thereof, careful to engage themselves, to obey him more perfectly. Thus it wrought in *David, Psal. 119. 8. I will keep thy Statutes, O forsake me not utterly!* These are the persons, who are called to exercise hope in God, in this case. To instruct them how to perform this great duty aright, I shall propound five Directions.

1. *Direction.* Make it clear unto your own souls, that you have a good ground of hope. See that your faith in God is right. For this hope is the daughter of Faith. And, If you are in the dark, as to the present sight of your good estate; consider whether formerly, when you had a clear light, you then knew that your soul said, *The Lord is my Portion.* For it may

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be, at sometimes, with a true Believer, spiritu-
ally, as it was with *Eutychus*, bodily, in *Acts*
20. 10. that, though life is in him, yet he hath
not the sense of it. Then, though God's face
is towards him, yet he complains that he hath
long hid his face from him; as *David* did, in
Pf. 13. 1. and, if his Ministers speak comfort-
ably to him; it is with him as it was with
the People of *Israel*, when *Moses* spake as
comfortably unto them as at any time, but
they hearkened not unto *Moses* for anguish
of heart, *Exod.* 6. 9. and, when he remem-
bers God, he is troubled, and complaineth, and
his spirit is overwhelmed, as *Asaph* found, in
Pf. 77. 3. In this case, Faith it self must be
helped, by reflecting upon former experience.
This course *Asaph* took, and found relief by
it, *ibid.* ver. 5, 6. So a Believer having called
to mind former passages between God and his
Soul, when he made diligent search; and, up-
on tryal of his estate toward God, by Scripture
light, found it to be good, hath good ground
to hope in God, that it is so still, and it will so
continue for ever, and that from the sure
Word of God in the Scripture, which assures
us that God's drawing us to himself, in Christ,
is from his everlasting love, *Jer.* 31. 3. and that
Christ, having loved his own, which are in the
World, loveth them unto the end, *John* 13. 1.
and that gifts and calling of God are without
repentance, *Rom.* 11. 29. As a man who hath
deliberately cast up his accounts, and summed

up the particulars exactly, when he took a fit season for it; if afterward, when being sick, or in some hurry of business, he is not fit to review the particulars, he be demanded how the Accounts stand, he will refer himself to the foot of his Account, in a certain persuasion that it is right; so a Believer, being under temptations and seeming desertion, may, and should exercise this hoping in God, and hath good ground so to do, from what he formerly found when he diligently searched into particulars, though now he cannot call them to mind. Or, as a Woman with Child, having felt it stir; her Womb, knows thereby that she hath been quickened, and conceived, and hath thereby comforting hope that it will go on, though she doth not always feel it stir: So it is, in this case; and much rather, For, that conception may dye, and the Woman may miscarry; but so cannot the regenerate, being born again, not of Corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Pet. 1. 23.

2. *Direction.* When thus the ground of hope is cleared to be good, and way is made for the exercise of it; then let it be exercised, in its purging work. This is the first use wherein hope is to be improved in this case, For every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure, 1 John 3. 3. Else that which now hindreth your comfort and peace, will hinder them, till it be taken away

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away. Sin is the great impediment of all our good. This therefore must be the first work of this hope, the purging away of sin. Therefore the Church in my Text, took that course: Saying, *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord*, ver. 40. Do ye the like, in a like case, that you may do so, follow these Directions, 1. Pray the Lord to shew wherefore he contendeth with you, *Job* 10. 2. with purpose of heart to forsake whatever sin provoketh him to anger. This was *Elihu's* counsel to *Job*; Surely, saith he, *It is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend. That which I see not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.* *Job* 34. 31, 32. Pray him also to shew you, what he would have you to do, as *David* prayed, in *Pf.* 86. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy Name;* Pray him, that as he sends afflictions, so he would supply grace, that you may profit by them. For *he is the Lord our God, the Holy one of Israel, our Redeemer, that teacheth us to profit*, *Isa.* 48. 17. Repenting *Ephraim* found the benefit of this course. God took notice of their bemoaning themselves, with confession of their unsubduedness to God's will and yolk, and of their prayer, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, thou art the Lord my God*, *Jer.* 31. 18. What benefit had *Ephraim* hereby? They tell us that, in ver. 19. *Surely after I was turned, I repented; and, af-*
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ter that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, &c. 2. Having thus done, search the Scripture, and your own hearts, to find out the particular sin, or sins, which have brought this affliction upon you, or which do hinder the exercising of your hope. 1. To find out the particular sin, or sins, which have brought this affliction upon you; Consider, 1. For what sins God hath threatned, in his Word, or inflicted upon others, such judgments as are upon you, *Ezek. 12. 25. Jer. 26. 4, 5, 6. Zeph. 3. 6, 7.* 2. How you have abused those things wherein or whereby God afflicteth you. *Eli*, and *David* were too indulgent to their Children, and were punished in them and by them. *Israel* abused the Corn and Wine, the Wool and Flax, the Silver and Gold that God had given them. Therefore God took them away, *Hos. 2. 8, 9.* God caused the Land to keep the Sabbaths, while the Jews were in Captivity, for their not sanctifying the Sabbaths, in their own Land. And for their lightly esteeming the Word preached unto them, the Lord brought a famine of the Word upon them, *Amos 8. 11.* There is now much sickness and mortallity among us: did you not mis-spend your time and strength in the days of your health? sundry are restrained from the publick Ordinances; Is it not because they have disregarded them, or been unfruitful or unprofitable unto them? 3. Search, if you have not been faulty towards others,

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in the things you now suffer your selves. They that spoiled and dealt treacherously with others, shall be spoiled and dealt treacherously with themselves, Isa. 33. 1. He that leadeth into Captivity shall go into Captivity; he that killeth with the Sword must be killed by the Sword. Rev. 13. 10. He shall have Judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy, Jam. 2. 13. Do others wrong you, in your names, in your estates, in any of their dealing with you? Consider, how you have wronged others. Are others helpless and hard-hearted towards you, in your afflictions? If, upon search, you find that you have been so to others, give God the glory of his righteousness, and, with *Adonibeseck*, as I have done, so hath God requited me. Judg. 1. 7. 4. If you have not profited by afflictions formerly upon you; you justly suspect that he reneweth, and, it may be, increaseth your afflictions, for that cause. For so the Lord threatned his people of old, *If ye will not for all this (viz. former lesser punishments inflicted on you) hearken unto me, there will I punish you seven times more for your sins*, Lev. 26. 18. And the same he repeats again, and again, four or five times, in that Chapter. And he did according, when the People of *Israel* turned not unto him that smote them, the Prophet told them, for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, Isa. 9. 12. and it is thrice repeated in that Chapter. So hath the Lord dealt with

us, in this place; for sundry years past, he hath visited us with returns of Sicknesse, every following year sharper than the former; because whatever purposes Men and women had, and whatever promises they made, when God's hand was upon them, all wore off, and came to nothing, after he had released them: So that we, in this Wilderness, may be justly charged for dealing with God, as the People of *Israell* did in the Wilderness, and have cause to expect, as they found from the Most High, *Psl. 78. 32. to 38.* In this case, God dealeth with his People, as Physicians are wont to do with their Patients, upon whom when they find that the Physick formerly given doth not work, they second it with some stronger purge; and, when they find that the disease is so settled, that quicker courses are not effectual; they prescribe a course of longer continuance. 5. Search to find out your own special corruptions; the sins of your Nature, whereunto you are naturally, that is, by your natural constitutions, more addicted and inclined, than unto other; the sins of your callings, that is, such as whereunto, by occasion of your place and vocation, or your course of life and conversation, you may have more and more frequent occasions of, and greater and stronger inducements, and inticements to, than others, and the sins of the times and places in which you live. This course *David* took, and thereby proved that he was upright before God,

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God, *Pf.* 18. 23. 6. Call to mind of what sins you have been formerly admonished and convinced publickly by the Ministers of the Word, or privately by Godly friends, and others; or secretly by the motions of God's Spirit, and checks of your own Consciences, but have not repented of them, nor turned from them. For it is God's manner, to open the ears of men, and to seal instructions by afflictions, as *Elisha* told *Job*, though he misapplied it to his case, *Job* 33. 14. to 30. 2. Having found out the particular causes for which God contendeth with you; add thereunto another search, to find out those sins which hinder the exercise of this hope more directly and immediately; as, 1. Your aptness to have hard thoughts of God. This is very injurious and dishonourable to God, and therefore he frequently in Scripture expostulateth with, and complaineth of his People for it: As you may see in *Jer.* 2. 31. *Exek.* 33. 10, 11. *Mich.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *David* found out this evil in himself, and repented of it; as you may see in *Pf.* 31. 22. and 116. 11, 12. 3. Your aptness to be short spirited with God, which is contrary to the waiting of hope. This greatly incensed the wrath of God against his People of old, of whom it is said, in *Psal.* 78. 40, 41. *How often did they provoke him in the Wilderiness, and grieve him in the Desert? yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.* So do all they, whose hoping in God ceaseth, if he do not grant

grant them the particular thing which they expect, and in their time, and by their means.

3. Your unwarranted expectations of good, without mixture of any evil; of peace without trouble; of health without sickness; of ease without pain; of joy without sorrow; of prosperous successes without crosses; which God hath no where promised, but hath fore-told the contrary every where in his Word; that he will visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, Ps. 89. 32. and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, Acts 14. 22. and that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, Heb. 12. 6. And the reason why Christ fore-told these things, is, that, when they come to pass, we might not be offended, as himself saith, in Job. 16. 1. and that, when the time shall come, we may remember that he told us of them, as he saith in ver. 4. 4. Your aptness to be slight Spirited and careless in retaining the favour of God, and in maintaining the workings of his spirit in you. The former, the Church found in themselves and confessed, in Isa. 64. 7. *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.* For the latter, the Lord reproveth the Church of Ephesus, though he took notice of many good things in them, and done by them: Nevertheless, he tells them, that he hath this against them, *that they had left their*
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first love, Rev. 2. 2, 3, 4. and commands them, Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works: Else I will come unto thee quickly, &c. ver. 5. 5. Be humbled for, and repent of your frustrating of God's expectations, as the great provocation of God to disappoint your expectations. Consider, to this end, what God hath done for us, and therefore doth expect from us, in that which the Lord said concerning the house of Israel, in Isa. 5. 4, 5. and let us fear lest our unfruitfulness, unprofitableness, and unanswerableness to the means and mercies received, incense his wrath and jealousy against us more than against others, for whom he hath not done so much, as he hath done for us, for so he determined concerning Israel; you only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities, Amos 3. 2.

2. Having thus searched and tried your ways: the next duty is, to turn again to the Lord, with unfeigned repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ, and amendment of Life. This was the fruit of David's considering his ways, his turning his feet unto Gods testimonies, Psal. 119. 59. Else you do but, as if a wounded man should cry to the Chyrurgeon for ease of his pain, but will not endure to have the arrow head, or splinter, that sticks in his flesh, plucked out. If I regard iniquity in my heart, said David, the Lord will not hear my prayer, Ps. 66.

18. And the people of *Israel* found that when they did evil as they could, and cast off the thing that is good, and yet prayed unto God as their God, he would not own them, nor accept their Prayers, but upbraided them with their sins; as you may see, in *Jer.* 4. 4, 5. *Hos.* 8. 2, 3. Therefore the Church in my Text, took a right course to strengthen their hope in God, when they resolved upon this order, first to search and try their ways, and turn again to the Lord, and after that, to lift up their hearts, with their hands unto God in the Heavens, *Lam.* 3. 40, 41. These things being done, that your hope may act aright.

3. The third Direction, which is to be attended, that you may exercise this hope, is to use this hope aright, in its second work, for encouragement, by your cherishing in your selves good thoughts of Gods good purposes towards you, and expectation of good from God, suitable to your needs: Hereunto the Lord encouraged the repenting Jews, in their Captivity in *Babylon*, *Jer.* 29. 11. to 15. Having promised them that, at the time appointed, he would visit them, and perform his good towards them, in causing them to return, he acquainted them with his good thoughts towards them, as the reason of it, and what he would work in them, to fit them for that mercy; saying, *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Then

shall

when ye call upon me, and ye shall go, and pray
unto me, and ye shall seek me, and find me, when
I shall search for me with all your hearts, &c.
Do not conclude concerning Gods thoughts to-
wards you, by present sense and feeling, but
by his own word. Therefore David resolved
to hearken to what God the Lord saith, not to
what carnal reason and sense would say, and
the reason of his so resolving, is drawn from
the expectation of his hope; for he will speak
peace unto his people, and to his Saints, Ps. 85.8.
and his expectation so grounded, was so strong,
that he pleaded it with God, saying, in Ps. 119.
49, 50. Remember thy word unto thy servant,
upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This
is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath
quickned me. And well may believers be
strengthened in this hope, having it built upon
so firm a foundation, as the word of God, con-
cerning which, David saith, in the same Ps. ver.
89. 90. For ever O Lord, thy word is settled in
heaven. Thy faithfulness unto all generations;
thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
How is the earth established? we see, if you
cast the least stone upwards in the Air, it abid-
eth not there, but soon falls down the Earth;
yet the earth it self, though it is an huge, vast
heavy body, abideth in the air, where-with it
is surrounded, and wherein it hangeth. How
is this done? It hath no Pillars to hold it up,
but the Decree and Word of that mighty God,
who upholdeth all things by the word of his
power,

power, *Heb. 1. 3.* His power accompanying his Word, upholdeth the earth in the midst of the air, and shall it not support our hearts, in the midst of all temptations? If the greatness of our former sins, of which you have now repented, dismay you; remember what the word of the Lord saith, in *Isa. 55. 7.* *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will multiply to pardon.* Say not, I cannot think that God can have any good purposes and thoughts toward such a sinful wretch and rebel, as I have been. For to prevent this, the Lord addeth, in ver. 8, 9. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* If the Lord, in the time of your distress, bring to remembrance sins formerly, many years past, committed by you, but not repented of, look at it, as an instruction, which he joyneth with correction, to awaken you to repentance, as he did *Josephs* bretheren, when they were committed to prison, *Gen. 42. 21.* But, if sins committed before your calling, or since, but repented of, be set before you; do not think that they are unpardoned, or that the pardon is revoked, or that God doth it to upbraid you with them. God can, for holy and good ends, read over to his servants old bills

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bills of debt, which yet are cancelled, to humble them, and to make them more thankful, and more watchful. Thus he made *Job* possess the sins of his youth, *Job*. 13. 26. And if the Lord defer the full and satisfying manifestation of his favour to you, after you have repented; do not impute that dispensation to his, not forgiving your sins, but to his fatherly wisdom and Love, to excite you thereby to perfect your repentance unto the full mortifying of your sins. As *David* dealt with *Abisolam*, whom, though his heart was towards him, and as a token thereof, he sent for him to return to *Jerusalem*, yet let not him see his face for two years after his return, *2 Sam*. 14. 14. 28. So the Lord dealt with *David*, he pardoned his sin. *2 Sam*. 12, 13. yet withheld joy and gladness from him, till he had more thorowly repented, and fervently prayed that he would restore to him the joy of his salvation, *Pf*. 57.

The fourth Direction is in reference to God's delays; If you find yet not the good you seek, then exercise your hope in its third work, which is, waiting upon God. Hereunto the Lord encouraged his people in Captivity, by a Vision, concerning their deliverance, which the Prophet *Habbakkuk* received from God, and of which the Lord said, *The Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye; though it tarry, Hab*. 2. 3: Set down this for a concluded truth, which every true believer may rest upon, that, the
Lord

Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his Mercies, Lam. 31, 32. And, that he may do so, he waiteth season, for he is a God of judgment, as *Isa* faith in *Isa*. 30. 18. Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you. For *Jehovah* is a God of Judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for him. The Lord waits for a time, wherein he shall be exalted in being gracious unto his People. That time is the time of their renewed repentance and conversion unto God, as to the most High. Then God will have the Highest place in their Hearts. Pray that this may be wrought in you, and that thereby you may be fitted for the good you hope for, and wait for it, till God's time comes. For all they are blessed that wait for him. They are now blessed in their state, and they shall be blessed in their enjoyments. In the mean time, *They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, they shall walk, and not faint, Isa. 40. 31.*

The fifth Direction is, in reference to afflictions continuing upon you; while God delays his bestowing the good you wait for, exercise your hope in its fourth work, which is patience, For, if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it, *Rom. 8. 25.* It is

is Christ's precept, *In your patience possess your souls*, Luke 21. 19. As Faith gives us the possession of Christ, so patience gives us the possession, first, of our selves, and then of all good things. *Let patience have its perfect work*, saith the Apostle, Jam. 14. This it hath two ways: When it puts forth perfect acts, whereunto it ariseth by certain steps. The first is a silent submission, with a voluntary resignation of our selves to the will of God. So David did, and said, *I opened not my mouth, because it was thy doing*, Ps. 39. 9. The second is, a thankful acceptation of the affliction, with, as it were, a kissing of the rod, wherewith our Heavenly Father correcteth us. This is that, which, in a soul truly humble, is called *the acceptance of the punishment of his sin*, Lev. 26. 41. unto this step Job's patience ascended, who said, when he had lost all his Creature-possession, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, and blessed be the Name of the Lord*, Job 1. 21. The third, and highest step, is, to count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, Jam. 1. 2. This is the highest step, for perfecting the acting of patience: Therefore he addeth to that, *Let patience have its perfect work*, to shew that then it hath it. The second way whereby patience comes to have its perfect work, is, when patience perseveres in acting. *The good ground*, saith Christ, *is the honest and good heart that brings forth fruit with patience*, Luke 8. 18. where *υπομονη*, signifies

fies both patience and perseverance. It is not sufficient to be patient in some troubles, but it must be exercised in all; nor, at sometime only, but always; and then only, and not else. patience hath its perfect work, and when patience hath its perfect work, then every grace hath its perfect work.

The third case, wherein we are to be instructed, how to exercise this hope aright, in our private and personal Concernments, is, in reference to the times future. When fears of evils do come disquiet mens minds and hearts, many secret mis-givings of heart are incident even to true Believers, by reason of the Flesh remaining in them, in part, that sundry outward afflictions, by crosses, or losses of dearest Relations, or of the means of outward subsistence, or of liberty, or of life, may befall them: or inward temptations and sins may prevail against them; which fears do usually dis-sweeten to them present mercies and accordingly hinder their thankfulness to God for them. Therefore the instruction is of great importance, and of continual use, which we are now upon. For the more distinct handling whereof I shall endeavour to clear two things. 1. Something concerning such fears 2. How this hope is to be exercised about them.

1. For the first. Fear is an affliction acted and exercised upon the apprehension of some impendent and approaching evil. This fear is,

in all Storms and Tempests,

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is, sometimes culpable, sometimes commendable. 1. Fear is culpable, and a sin, when it is opposite to trusting in God, of this *Soomon* faith; *The fear of man bringeth a snare; but who so trusteth in the Lord shall be set on high.* Prov. 29. 5. He shall be set above the reach of snares, and so be safe. This fear may be known by three characters. 1. By its rise; when it ariseth from distrust in God's promises and providence. This is an habitual ruling distemper in all natural men; it is not so in the regenerate; yet, by the strength of temptation, and the flesh, in them, it sometimes prevails actually. Hence *David* discovered a suddain perturbation of his mind, by unadvised speeches, which were dishonourable to God, when he said, *I shall perish and die by the hand of Saul.* Sam. 27. 1. 8 and, *I said in my haste, all men are liars.* 116. 11. 2. By its immediate object; whether it be sin, or trouble. 1. Fear, lest they should hereafter fall into such or such a Sin, fixeth their thoughts upon sin, and insnares them in sin. It is very dangerous to propound to a man's self any thought of sin, as sin, especially of the materials of sin. For such is man's weakness, and Satan's subtilty, that the contemplation of sin in the thoughts, though it be not done with any intent to commit it, but to avoid it, defiles the soul, before men are aware. For sin is a defiler, and leaves a stain behind it, whereby thoughts of sin soon become sinful thoughts,

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thoughts,

thoughts, and the speculation of sin falls into speculative acting sin. Hereof the Apostle James warneth us, in *Jam.* 1. 14. Saying, Every man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, &c. 2. Fear of future troubles and sufferings, arising from fore-thinking them, becomes blame-worthy, three ways. 1. When they imagine such as are never likely to befall them, and are disquieted with fears of them. This is to fear shadows; which argueth weakness in the judgment, or guilt in the conscience. That may be said to such truly, which Zebul spake to Gaal scoffingly; *Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men, Judg.* 9. 36. It is threatned for a punishment upon sinners, in *Lev.* 26. 36. and executed upon them, in *Prov.* 28. 1, 2. When they think of future evils, which are but possible, and, at the most but probable, with such terror, as if they were certain and inevitable; and so give certain strength to an uncertain cross. This God reproveth, in *Isa.* 57. 11, 3. When they multiply and magnify evils that are to be expected as certainly future, above their due proportion, and so fear lesser evils, as if they were the greatest evils. Christ warned his Disciples of this, in *Mat.* 10. 28. The third Character of such fears, is the evil effects of them. 1. *Bondage*, which is contrary to faith, *Rom.* 8. 15. 2. *Torment*, which is contrary to love, 1 *John*

4. 18. 3. *Discouragement*, from using good means for the prevention of the thing feared; Hence the distrustful Jews rejected the Prophets exhortation to conversion; saying, *if our transgressions, and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them; how should we then live,* Ezek. 33. 10. 4. *Venturing upon the use of unwarranted means to avoid the thing feared;* whereby they bring it upon themselves. Thus *Saul*, fearing that, if *David* lived, his posterity should succeed him in the Throne, sought to kill him; and the *Sanhedrim* fearing that, if *Christ* were let alone, all men would believe in him, and the *Romans* would come, and take away both their place and Nation; concluded, that *Christ* must be put to death. Both brought upon themselves that which they feared, by the wrath of God against them, for using ill means to avoid it. According to God's threatening denounced against all such, in *Prov. 10. 24. The fear of the wicked shall come upon him.*

2. Fear is commendable, and good, and our Duty, when it hath hope in God's Mercy joyned inseparably with it. Of this Fear *David* saith, *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy,* Ps. 147. 11. This filial reverential fear of God, may be known by three Characters. 1. By the rise of it; it ariseth from faith. *By faith Noah moved with fear prepared an ark,* Heb. 11. 7. 2. By the direct and immediate object

of it, which is God himself. This was so eminent in *Izback*, that God hath a demonstration from *Izback's* of him, he is called the fear of *Izback*, *Gen. 31. 53.* When others fear men, fear poverty, fear disgrace, a Believer feareth God, the Majesty, Authority, Power of the great God is strong upon his heart. This makes him careful to worship God, according to his revealed will, and to walk uprightly before God, to honour, serve, and please him in his whole conversation, and to seek the face of God in Jesus Christ. 3. By its effects, which are such as these: 1. It keeps from carnal security, and placing our rest and contentment in worldly things. Thus it wrought in *Job*, whilst he lived in outward prosperity: Therefore he said in his affliction, *the thing that I greatly feared is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet, Job 3. 25, 26* and from trusting in spiritual priviledges and graces received: whereof *Paul* warned all Gentile-Christians, saying, *be not high minded, but fear, Rom. 11. 20. 2.* It makes men careful to avoid what might provoke God against them, and bring on them the evil feared. Hence they fear and avoid sin, as a deadly snare. *The fear of the Lord, is a well spring of life, to depart from the snares of death, Prov. 14. 27.* 2. Hardness of heart, as a mischievous evil, *Prov. 28. 14. Blessed is the man that feareth alway, but he that hardneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.* 3. Departing from God,

so

to faith God, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart, Jer. 32. 46.* 3. This fear quickens to use all good means to fence our selves against future evils: as fear of an inundation causeth men to raise banks for keeping out the Sea, and, if a breach be made, to repair it speedily. Thus this fear wrought in *Jacob*, when *Esau* came out against him; and in *Noah*, to provide against the deluge; and in those *Egyptians*, to keep themselves and their Cattle in their houses, to escape the storm, which *Moses* fore-told would kill all that were in the field. The more we are prepared, by this fear for afflictions, before they come, the less shall we be oppressed with them, when they come. For thereby, either afflictions shall be weakned, and less able to hurt us, or we shall be strengthened, and more able to bear them. Now, this hope, whereof we speak, being rightly exercised, will be of great efficacy, to quicken good fear, and to subdue sinful fear in us. Therefore, I shall endeavour to shew you how you may exercise this hope aright in four Directions.

1. Lay a sure ground-work for this hope to be built upon. This is then done, when you know that your soul saith, the Lord is your portion. For, 1. This will assure your interest in God himself, who is an all sufficient portion. When you can say with *David*, *the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my Cup.* Ps. 16. 5. you may comfortably add, as he did, in

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verse 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places : yea, I have a godly heritage.* 2. This will cause you to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, as Barnabas had exhorted the Antiochians to do, in Acts 11. 23. *For where a mans treasure is, there will his heart be also.* Mat. 6. 21. As the needle in the Compass, being touched with the Load-stone, is in continual motion, till it points to the North ; the reason whereof, some conceive is, because in the North are Rocks of Load-stone, with which the needle so touched, hath a sympathy : so the soul being touched by the spirit of Faith, is in continual motion, till it points unto God in Christ, that living Rock, and true Load-stone, who draws believers to him, by a spiritual sympathy, which they have with him ; as he said in Job. 12. 32. *If I be lifted up from the earth, it will draw all men unto me.* Then, and not before, they have true rest: Then they may say with David, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul,* Ps. 116. 7. 3. This will settle and strengthen your hearts against all distracting, discouraging, distrustful fears about future evils. For, *things to come are yours, when you are Christs,* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. The worst that can befall you, shall not loose that blessed union that is between God in Christ, and your souls. Not sin past, for that is already pardoned ; and therefore shall not condemn you hereafter, Rom. 8. 1. nor shall sin to come, have dominion over you, Rom. 6. 14. For you are

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kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. Nor death, though it may separate two near Friends, the soul and body; yet it shall joyn together more fully and perfectly two better friends, Christ and the soul, which, when it is absent from the body, is present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8. and in the Resurrection, when both shall be reunited, *we shall be for ever with the Lord*, 1 Thes. 4. 17. Nor Temptation; see how Paul triumphed over all principalities and powers, over life and death, over things present and to come, in assurance that nothing would separate him, or any true believer from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 38, 39. *yea, that all things should work for his and their good*, Rom. 8. 28. A believer in Christ, is as sure of the time to come, as he is of the time present or past. For he can say with the Church, in Ps. 48. ult. *This God is our God, and he will be our guide unto death*; and can look unto Christ, as *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*, Rev. 1. 8. and he hath the promises of God in Christ, for the future, Isa. 46. 3, 4. *Joh. 10. 27, 28, 29.*

2. This ground-work being well laid, build upon it for the future, by exercising this hope. 1. In its purging work, 1 Joh. 3. 3. to purge out inordinate affection, whereby the soul cleaves close, and fast to present things and creatures, whence they are as afraid to part

with them, as one is to have a piece of linnen cloth or plaster plucked off from an ulcerous sore, whereunto it sticketh so fast, that it can hardly be pulled away without great pain, and without drawing the skin and part of the flesh with it; whereas, if that ulcerous matter were purged, and the sore healed, the plaister would fall off it self, and the cloth might be taken away, without any great pain or difficulty. Hoping in God, being rightly exercised, worketh this great cure, by rectifying mens apprehensions concerning the creatures, and ordering their affections aright towards God, looking at both with the eye of Faith, by Scripture light, which represents all things, out of God in Christ, when they become the objects of our hope, as vain, and sinful and hurtful. The creatures are good, as they come out of Gods hand, but as they are abused, by being idolized, they become vain, and degenerate into nothing. For as *an idol is nothing in the World*, 1 Cor. 8. 4. Nothing which men account it to be, not to be trusted in. So creatures are but vain and empty, like those blasted eares of corn in *Pharaohs* dream, unless God fills them with his blessing. It is a common error and delusion, to think that if you had such friends, such relations, such estates, &c. you should live happily and comfortably. For as *David* said of an Horse, in reference to getting the victory, *an Horse is a vain thing*: So we may say of all creatures, being separated from

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from God, in reference to happiness and comfort, they are vain things to be trusted in, for which Christ called that rich man a fool, *Luke 12. 19, 20.* 2. It is a sin against the first Commandment, to give the honour which is due to God alone, unto any creature, as men do that glory in them, *Jer. 9. 23, 24.* and set their Hearts on them, *Pf. 62. 10, 11.* This is Idolatry, *Col. 3. 5.* It is Atheisme, a denial of Gods all-sufficiency, which is his peculiar glory, and the foundation of upright walking in the Saints, *Gen. 17. 1.* Its the cause of all sins, The Schoolmen do rightly define sin to be an aversion of the soul from the immutable God, and turning of it to the mutable creature. For all sin implies an over valuing of the creatures, and an undervaluing of God. See with what indignation God reproves this sin, in *Jer. 2. 13. 14.* 3. Thus to cleave unto present things and creatures, is very hurtful to your selves. For, 1. It steals mens hearts from God, (as *Abshalom* stole the hearts of the people from *David*) unto things that cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are Vain, *1 Sam. 12. 25.* 2. It provoketh God to withdraw and withhold his concurrence and blessing from the creatures, without which you cannot have any good from them, nor by them; your own experience may convince you of this. For hence it is that creatures work unequally, not always one way; friends and other things, sometimes comfort us, sometimes afflict us. Physick could not cure *Aſa*, because he trusted

n the Physicians more than in God ; that all may see, creatures cannot of themselves do us any good, but as God worketh by them, and with them whose peculiar glory is to *do good or evil*, *Isa. 41. 23.* 3 It provokes God to hide his face from you ; and then, though your mountain stand, you will not have peace, as *David* found, in *Psa. 30. 6, 7.* Yea, to fill you with terrors in the midst of your jollities, as he did *Belshazzar*, in *Dan. 5.* Yea, to reject your Prayers, in the day of your distress, and to send you to your Idols for help, as he did those, in *Judg. 10. 13, 14.* *For they that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercies, Jon. 2. 8.*

3. The third direction is, to exercise this hope in its quickening work. For this hope is a lively Hope, *1 Pet. 1. 3.* It being quickened by the *live making Spirit*, hath lively operations and efficacy, in the souls of believers, to quicken true child like fear of God in them, which is the beginning of Wisdom, *Pro. 1. 7.* For though knowledge and Faith go before it, yet there is no true wisdom in either of them, unless they work in a man this fear. This fear will make us stand in awe of God, when we see the effects of his Wrath upon others. So it wrought in *David*, when he saw *Uzzab* smitten dead, in *2 Sam. 7. 6, 9.* And when he saw that God did put away the Wicked as dross, *Psa. 119. 12.* And in all that, heard of the dreadful stroke of Gods vengeance upon

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Ananias and Saphira, in *Acts* 5. 10, 11. It will make men tremble at his word, *Isa* 66. 2. At the commands of the word, lest they should disobey them, at the threatnings of the word, lest they should fall under them, *2 Kings* 22. 19. At the promises of the word, lest they should fall short of them, *Heb.* 4. 1. This fear breeds care, and quickens to self humbling, putting his mouth in the dust, if there may be Hope, *Lam.* 3. 29. And to speedy reformation; as we see in that speech of Shecaniah unto Ezra, *Ezra* 10. 2, 3. And to fervent prayer, as we see it wrought in Jacob, *Hos.* 12. 4. with *Gen.* 32. and Hezekiah *Jer.* 26. 19. and the King and people of Niniveh, *John* 3. 5. and the Prophet Habbakuk, *Hab.* 3. 16. It quickens believers to seek access unto God, by the Mediator, *Dent.* 5. 27, 28, 29. And therefore to flee unto Christ, as Chickens get under the wings of the Hen, in affrightments, and to trust in God, through Christ, and in his word. So it wrought in David, *Pf.* 56. 3. Lastly it quickens us to fear the Lord, and his goodness; *Hos.* 3. 5. It will not suffer men to be wanton upon the goodness of God, to slight his goodness, to do evil, because God is good; or to sin, that grace may abound: but it will cause them to fear the Lord and his goodness, fear to offend his goodness. The goodness of God will strongly engage their hearts to walk closely and uprightly with God.

4. The fourth Direction is, to exercise this hope in its encouraging and strengthening work, to establish and settle our hearts against all discouraging distrustful fears: 1. Of evil tidings, *Ps. 112. 7.* 2. Of evil times; when all things are turned upside down, and the Mountains, Princes and great Potentates, render themselves terrible to the Church and People of God, and the prophane multitude rage against them, like the roaring of the waters, and they can have no rest in their dwellings; yet they, the Church and People of God, shall have sweet refreshments, by the Promises and Ordinances, as they of *Jerusalem* had by the waters of *Siloah*, and safety, by the protection of God, who is their refuge, and a present help in times of trouble; as it is excellently expressed in *Ps. 46.* 3. Of the prosperity and opposition of evil men, against which *David* comforted himself by hoping in God, *Ps. 49. 5. 16.* and, upon his experience encouraged all Believers to take the same course, *Ps. 27. 1, 2, 3. 13. 14.* 4. Of whatever may or can befall them in this world, *Ps. 91. 1. &c.* For, 1. God is graciously present with them, *Rom. 8.* 2. Therefore they may be confident of safety against future evil, as *David* was, *Ps. 23. 4.* Though armies should surround them, as the *Syrians* did *Elisha*, they have no cause of discouraging fears; For, if the Lord open the eyes of their Faith, they may see an invible guard of Angels about them, as *Elisha's* ser-

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vant saw about his Master, 2 Kings 6. 15. 2. They are dear to God, as the apple of his eye, Zach. 2. 8. 3. All future events are in God's not in their enemies, nor in their own hands, Ps. 31. 15. 4. They have the sure word and promises of God, for them, Isa. 41. 10. 5. God is, in all the changes that pass over them, unchangeable, as in himself, Jam. 1. 17. So in his love to them, Jer. 31. 3. and in his faithfulness in his promises, Ek. 56. 4. to whom they are called to commit their souls in well doing, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, 1 Pet. 4. 19. doing their own Duties, and leaving events to God, as Jacob Gen. 43. 14. Hest. 4. 16. and they in Dan. 3. 16.

The second case, wherein we are to be instructed how to exercise this, in reference to the publick state of the Churches of Christ under persecution, and the oppression of enemies, remains to be spoken to. Which that I may the more distinctly and fully declare; I shall endeavour to clear two things: 1. What disposition of Spirit is necessary to qualify the Person, to make him a fit subject of this hope. 2. How they who are thus qualified must exercise it.

1. For the first, whosoever would have and exercise this hope in reference to the publick state of the afflicted Churches of Christ, they must have and exercise publick Spirits in the communion of Saints, that is, they must be sanctified by Faith in Christ, and joyned unto Christ.

Christ visibly, as the head of his Church, in communion with the Church, which is the body, and take to heart the publick state of the Churches, and Christ his Interest in them, whatever their own private condition is, and to prefer the publick concernments before and above their own private, their judgments, affections, and endeavours. We must esteem that spiritual Society, and the concernments of it, as more considerable than our own. Hereof God himself gives us example, who prefers his Church before and above all the World besides, as his *chief treasure*, *Exod. 19. 5.* his *jewels*, *Mal. 3. 17.* tells them that they are so *precious in his sight, and honourable and loved of him*; that he *will give men for them, and people for their life*, *Isa. 43. 4.* as he did call off *Senacherib* from *Jerusalem*, by sending *Tirhaka* the King of *Athiopia*, to invade his land, and so gave both *Ethiopians* and *Egyptians* into his hand, to free his Church from him. Now, God's judgment of persons and things should be the rule of our judgment. For we know that the judgment of God is according to truth. So did *Moses*, whose love acted so highly from his high esteem of the Church and God's interest of honour in it, that, though God offered to make him a great Nation, if he would let him alone, that he might consume *Israel* in the *Wilderness*, *Exod. 33. 10.* ye he was so far from accepting it, that he prayed the Lord to forgive their sin, and, if not, to blot

blot him out of the Book which he had written, *ver. 32.* David was so strongly engaged in his affections to the Church of God, that if all his petitions were to be put in *one*, it should be this, that he *might dwell in the House of the Lord, to behold his beauty there, Ps. 27. 4.* he had *rather be one day there, than a thousand elsewhere, and to be a Door-keeper in God's House, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness, Ps. 84. 9, 10.* The place of the publick Holy Assemblies, was a Tent, a Tabernacle, an unfixed. a moveable place, yet he calls that an House, a fixed Mansion. The People dwelt in Houses firmly built upon Foundations; yet David accounted the Houses of Wicked Men Tabernacles; he looked for no stability in the World, but only in the Church and fellowship of those that are in Covenant. See how affectionately he speaks of Church Assemblies and Communion with them, *Ps. 122. 8, 9.* of the same mind and spirit were the Saints in the Babilonish Captivity, *Ps. 137. 5, 6.* And the same Spirit works the like disposition in all the Members of Christ's mystical Body; *whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it; 1 Cor. 12. 26.* And they see good reason for their so acting in the concerns of the Churches of Christ. For, 1. They know that God hath recorded his Name there; and his Name is put upon Church members, and therefore his Name is honoured,

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or dishonoured, as things are well or ill with his Church. Hence it was, that *Joshua* was exceedingly afflicted for the flight of the People before *Ai*, though but about thirty were slain; *what shall I say, when Israel flee before the enemies? and the Canaanites will hear of it, &c. and what wilt thou do to the great Name?* *Josh. 7. 8, 9.* Therefore Christ teacheth us to joyn these together immediately; *Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come,* to shew us that answerable to the well-being of the Church, which is the Kingdom of Grace, will be the Honour of God's Name in this World. 2. They know that the welfare of all States and People, where Churches are, depends upon the welfare of the Church. For so runs the promise; *Israel shall be a blessing in the midst of the Land, Isa. 19. 24.* Hence it was that the Saints could not be satisfied with their own private welfare, if the Church of God was in affliction and danger, or under reproach. As you may see in *Uriah*, *2 Sam. 11. 11.* in *Nehemiah*, *Neh. 1. 3, 4.* with *2. 2, &c.* and in *Daniel*, though he was as highly preferred, as a subject could be, in the greatest Monarchy, *Dan. 10. 2, 3.* Hence also, when there are or hath been a double affliction upon them, both publick and private, and made it inconsiderable, in comparison. As we see in *Eli*, *1 Sam. 4. 18.* and his daughter in law, the wife of *Phineas*, *ver. 21. 22.* lastly, hence it was, that when they have had a double opportunity,

opportunity, of doing or procuring good to the
 publick, and to their own private; they have
 preferred the publick advantage before their
 own private interest. Thus *Terentius*, a Chri-
 stian Commander in the Wars under the Em-
 peror *Valens*, who was an *Arrain*, being willed
 by that Emperor, for a special Service done by
 him, to demand what he would, made his peti-
 tion to the Emperor, which he presented to
 him in writing; that the Christians might
 have the liberty of a Church by themselves, to
 Worship God apart from the *Arrians*. The
 Emperor read his petition, and misliking it, tore
 it, and threw it away. *Terentius* meekly ga-
 thered up the scattered pieces, and professed
 to the Emperor, that, if he could not be heard
 in God's cause, he would not make any suit for
 his own profit. How may this worthy Man
 shame most Christians, in these days, who, if
 their Garners may be full, their Sheep multi-
 ply, their Oxen be strong to labour, their
 Sons be as plants grown up, their Daughters
 polished and set forth with ornaments, and
 there be no complaining in the streets; think
 themselves happy, and regard not what be-
 comes of Religion, and of Christ's Churches;
 take not to heart the afflictions of God's Peo-
 ple, if their trading increase; one good Bar-
 gain will yield more comfort than all the Cala-
 mities of the Church can grieve them; they
 can hear and speak of the breaches and ruines
 of *Sion*, as the *Athenians* did of *News*, with-
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out remorse or regard: Brethren, it is a weighty matter to read Letters, and receive Intelligence in them concerning the state of the Churches. You had need to lift up your hearts to God, when you are about to read your Letters from our Native Countrey, to give you Wisdom, and hearts duly affected, that you may receive such Intelligences as you ought. For God looks upon every Man, in such cases, with a jealous eye; observing with what workings of bowels they read or speak of the Concernments of the Church. You see, in *Amos* 6. 6. how his wrath was incensed against those who solaced themselves with their private prosperity, but *were not sick*, their hearts ached not *for the affliction of Joseph*. 3. They know that, if they withdraw from being helpful to the Church, God will do good to his Church without them; but he will be avenged upon them that desert or neglect his Cause and People. This Argument *Mordecai* used to *Hester*, in *Hest.* 4. 13, 14. and it prevailed mightily with her to run the utmost hazard of her own Person, when there might be hope of some good to the Church thereby, *ver.* 16. For the contrary, *Meroz* was cursed by the Angel of the Lord, *because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty*, *Judg.* 5. 23. Though men cannot help the Lord, essentially or personally, yet they may be said to help him, relatively, in his cause and people, when they own his cause and people, and appear on that side,

side, when Satan and his instruments raise persecutions and reproaches against them: Though the Lord needs not mens help, in such cases; for, when he saw that there was no man, no intercessor, his own arm brought salvation unto him, Isa. 51. 16. Yet it is our Duty to shew on whose side we stand. For Christ will look on them as his enemies that disown his cause and people, at such times, as he saith, *He that is not with me is against me*, Mat. 12. 30. Are the people and ways of God under reproach? Christ is reproached in them and with them, Rom. 15. 3. *Object.* Ah! but they are called fools and fanaticks? *Ans.* When was it otherwise? Bernard complained *Bern de conf. ad Engew. Lib. 4.* of the like, in his time; *Ipsa Religio in opprobrium venit, & timor Domini simplicitas reputatur, ne dicam, fatuitas.* That is, Religion it self comes into reproach, and the fear of God is accounted simplicity, that I say, not folly. And before him *August de Verb. Dom.* Augustine describes the scoffs and frumps of luke-warm professors against the zeal of those that were frequent in spirit, serving the Lord, *Quid insanis? aium nimius est. Nunquid abii non sunt Christiani? Ista stultitia est, dementia est.* That is, *Why art thou mad? say they, your zeal is too much. What? are none Christians but you? That is folly, it is fanatickness.* And, before his time, long, how were

were the ancient Christians in the Ten Persecution, 300 years after Christ, traduced, reproached ! *Rev.* 12. 10. Before that in the Apostles days, *Paul* saith of himself and the rest, *we are fools for Christ's sake, &c.* *1 Cor.* 4. 10. and, *if we be beside our selves, it is to God,* *2 Cor.* 4. 13. *Peter* and *John* esteemed it a grace to be disgraced for Christ, *Acts* 5. 41. Christ well knew how cross to the natural affection of all men reproach and disgrace is ; therefore he, to arm his Disciples against it, shews them the happiness they should have by suffering reproaches and revilings, for his sake, and the Gospel, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12, and the woeful issue of declining it, *Mar.* 8. 28. Christ added, as a motive, to encourage his Disciples in suffering reproaches, that so persecuted they the Prophets, *Mat.* 5. 12. which of the Prophets escaped sharp tryal, this way ? yea, *David* himself, though a King, was despised by *Michael* for his zeal in bringing home the Ark, and dancing before it, with his head uncovered, as one of the vain persons, said she : but *David* was so far from being discouraged thereby, that his zeal was more inflamed, and his resolution increased ; *It was before the Lord,* said he, *which chose me before thy Father, &c.* *And I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight, &c.* *2 Sam.* 6. 21, 22. I have spoken the more largely unto this, because the present temptation of this time, in the other afflictions of the Churches,

is the reproachful title put upon the People of God, whom prophane men call *Fanaticks*. But, if he is a fool that will be laughed out of his coat; much more is he a fool, and a mad man, that will suffer himself to be laughed out of Heaven, that will hazard the loss of his soul and salvation, to free himself from the mocks and scoffs of a prophane and sinful World.

If Christ had not, for our sakes, endured the Cross, despising the shame, we could never have been redeemed and saved; let us go forth therefore unto him, without the Camp, bearing his Reproach. *Heb. 13. 13.* In the same Epistle, the Christian Hebrews are exhorted to call to remembrance the former days, in which, after they were illuminated, they endured a great sight of afflictions, partly whilst they were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst they became companions of them that were so used, *Heb. 10. 32, 33.* Let us do likewise, and own the reproached and persecuted people, and cause of Christ, in suffering times. With-hold not countenance, entertainment, protection, from such, if they come to us, from other Countreys, as from France, Germany or any other place. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the body, *Heb. 13. 2, 3.* The Lord required

required this of *Moab*, saying, *Make thy shadow as the Night, in the midst of the noon Day*, i. e. provide safe and comfortable shelter, and refreshment for my people, in the heat of persecution and opposition raised against them. *hide the out-casts, bewray not him that wanders.* Let mine out-casts dwell with thee *Moab*, be thou a covert to them, from the face of the spoiler, *Isa. 16. 3.* 4. *Object.* But so I may expose my self to be spoyled or troubled? He therefore, to remove this Objection, addeth, *for the danger, is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the Treaders down are consumed out of the Land.* While we are attending to our duty, in owning and harbouring Christ's witnesses, God will be providing for their and our safety, by destroying those that would destroy his people. Two helps I shall propound, to arm you against those fears, of reproach, or dangers, whereby men are apt to be drawn to flinch from the cause and witnesses of Christ, in suffering times. 1. Strengthen your faith. A sight of the invisible God, and an Eye to the recompence of reward, so quickned and strengthened the faith of *Moses*, that he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season : esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches, than the treasures of *Egypt*, *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* And as Faith will strengthen you hereunto, so Faith will be strengthened hereby, in your prayers against being led into Temptation, and
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lest unto scandalous evils, that might expose you to just Reproach. Therefore *David* having put up this request to God, that none that wait on God and seek him, should be ashamed or confounded for his sake, ungeth this, as an Argument, to strengthen his Faith; *Because for thy sake I have born reproach, shame hath covered my face, Ps. 69. 5, 6, 7. 2.* Exalt God, as the highest object of your fear: Fear God, as he ought to be feared, fear him above all. The greater fear will expel the lesser. Therefore the Lord prescribes this fearing him aright, as the best remedy against all carnal fears, whereby men are wont to be hindered from obeying God in those Duties that will expose men to hurt from the Creature, *1J. 8. 12, 13. and Chap. 51. 7, 8. 12, 13.* So doth Christ in *Mat. 10. 28.* The baulking of any Duty, which God commandeth, is the ready way to bring upon you, by the wrath of God, that very evil, which you fear that the doing of your duty will expose you to, by the wrath of Men. This was that Argument which the Prophet used to *Zedekiah*, in *Jer. 38. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.* Because he, fearing lest the *Jews*, that were fallen to the *Caldeans*, should deliver him into their Hand, and they should mock him; by disobeying the Commandments of God, brought upon himself, as a just punishment from the wrath of God, the thing which he feared.

2. The next thing to be shewn, for your instruction, is, how they that are so qualified should exercise this hope; in reference to the publick concernments of the Churches, in their low and afflicted condition. For this purpose I shall propound two directions.

1. See that you lay a sure foundation of this hope, a firm ground work for this hope to be built and exercised upon; Faith in God as his Churches portion, is this ground-work. Therefore let the eye of your Faith, through the glass of the word, look unto God, in this case; as *Jehosaphat* did, in *2 Chron. 20. 12. We have no might against this great Company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are upon thee.* Look not so much with the Eye of sense downward, and round about you, as with the eye of faith upward, and into the scripture-promises. There if the Lord open your eyes, you shall see that more are with the Church, and cause, and people of God, than can be against them. This course *David* took, and was comforted, even when he was surrounded with dangers, *Pf. 25. 15. Mine Eyes are ever towards the Lord, saith he, for he shall pluck my feet out of the Net.* That your Faith in God may be strengthened in the hour of temptation, in the time of *Josephs* afflictions; consider three things: 1. Christ his interest of property in the Churches of the Saints. For the Church is Christ's Vineyard. *The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, is the House*

of Israel, Isa. 5. 7. Solomon's Vineyard in Baal-haman was the choicest parcel of his Lands. Christ's Vineyard is the chiefest part of his Inheritance in the World. *Solom let forth his Vineyard to keepers.* But of this Vineyard, his Church, Christ saith, *My Vineyard which is mine is before me, Cant, 8. 11, 12.* Christ doth not let forth his Vineyard unto keepers, but himself keeps it under his own eye continually. Indeed, when his Vineyard answers not his cost and pains bestowed upon it, but, *when he looketh that it should bring forth grapes, it brings forth wild grapes, then, he will take away the hedge thereof, and breuk down the wall thereof, and then it shall be eaten up and trodden down, Isa. 5. 4, 5.* then the Boar of the Wood will waste it, and the wild Beast of the field will devour it, for a time, till good attain his end, in their repentance and amendment; and then he will be intreated to return, and look down from Heaven, and behold and visit this Vine, Ps. 10. 13, 14. And when it becomes a Vineyard of Red Wine, holding forth the value and worth of the Blood of Christ, in their faith and obedience, see what his faith of it: *I the Lord do keep it, I will wa-ter it every moment; least any hurt it, I will keep it night and day, Isa. 27. 2, 3.* 2. The Church is Christ's house, *the house of the living God, 1 Tim. 3. 15.* an house which cost him more than all the Silver, and Gold, and precious Stones, in the World will amount unto.

For God purchased the Church with his Blood, *Acts* 20. 27, 28. Christ is the builder and governor of it, *Heb.* 3. 3, 6. and therefore he will see to it, when it suffers any hurt, that it be repaired, and kept in repair. 3. The Church is Christ's Kingdom, which God will maintain against all Rebels, as you see at large in the second Psalm. 4. The Church is Christ's Spouse, and therefore nearer and dearer to him than any other Society in the World, *At his right hand stands the Queen in Gold of Ophir*, *Pf.* 45. 9. as Solomon set his Mother at his right hand, to shew that she was next to him, and above all other subjects. *Ahasuerosh* his wrath was so incensed against *Haman*, for plotting against his Queen, and her People, that he determined evil against him; and when he saw him fallen on the Bed whereon *Hester* was (though he did it to make request for his life) his wrath so boiled up to the height, that he said; *Will he force the Queen also before me in the House?* Then they covered *Haman's* face, and, at the King's command, hanged him upon the Gallows which he had prepared for *Mordecai*, as you may see in the 7th Chapter of *Hester*. The Love of Christ to the Church, which is his Spouse, infinitely exceeds the love of *Ahasuerosh* to *Hester*. Therefore they consult misery and ruin to themselves and their families, who plot against the Church. And woe to them that would force the Church to their own wills and devices, contrary to the

the mind of Christ. 5. The Church is Christ's body and fulness; Christ hath not his fulness without his Church. God hath put all things under Christ's feet, and hath given him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, Eph. 1. 22, 23. Hence he sympathiseth with them; *In all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63. 9.* and what is done against them, is done against him. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts 9. 4.* As when the least toe is trodden upon, the head, by the tongue, cries, why do you hurt me? you see what Christ's interest of propriety in his Church is, i. e. the greatest that can be. For it is his Vineyard, yea, more, his House, yet higher, his Kingdom, yet dearer, his Spouse, and dearer yet his own Body. And, you know, propriety is of great force with all, to use all their wisdom and power to maintain and preserve their Interest. Much more will Christ vindicate his own Interest of propriety in his Church against all opposers of it. 2. Consider the Covenant, whereinto God hath taken his Church and People; together with the promises, that, as to many Branches of the Covenant, belong unto them thereby. God saith unto his Church, *I swear unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine, Ezek. 16. 6.* and, of God it is said; *he will ever be mindful of his Covenant, Ps. 111. 5.* Upon this ground the faith of the Church was strengthened,

thened, when they were in a very low and forlorn state, to plead with God; Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from everlasting, Isa. 63. 16. and again, in verse 19. We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them, thy Name was not called upon of them. The promises that belong unto the Church and people of God, under this relation, are innumerable. I shall touch upon two or three, that are suitable unto them, in reference to the opposition of their enemies, Ps. 37. 12. 13. The wicked plotteth (or practiseth) against the just, and gnasheth at him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him, (that is, shall render him ridiculous, and contemptible to others, as he plots to make the Church be unto the world) for he seeth that his day is coming. By his day, is meant, his dismal, the day of his calamity, the day appointed of God for his punishment, the destruction, the the day when their Iniquity shall have an end. Such a day is coming upon them: Therefore it is added, in ver. 17. For the arms of the Wicked shall be broken; but Jehovah upholdeth the righteous. Behold, (saith the Lord) I will make Jerusalem a Cup of trembling unto all people that besiege it round about, Zach. 12. 2. The besiegers of Jerusalem, the Church of God, think they may as easily swallow it up, as man may a cup of Wine, and it is as delight-
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some unto them to do so; but they shall find it a cup of giddiness, a drink too strong for them; yea, a cup of poyson, that will cast them into a drunken sleep, out of which when they shall be awakened, horror, astonishment, trembling shall seize upon them. It is added, in verse 3. *And in that day, I will make Jerusalem a burthensome stone, for all people; all that burthen themselves with it, shall be cut in pieces; though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.* It is folly for one to lift a stone, that being too heavy for him to manage, will fall upon him and break his bones. Such a stone shall all that lift at the Church to remove it out of its place, find it to be unto themselves. The Lord Jesus, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given, hath said, speaking of Peters confessing him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; with a divine Faith, such as is wrought by the Revelation of the Father) *upon this Rock, I will build my Church; and the Gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Mat. 16. 16, 17, 18.* The Gates of hell, signify all the power and policy of the Devil, and all his instruments, they shall not prevail against Christ's Church, taken indefinitely. He will preserve his Church, in one place or other in the World, maugre all their malice. These, and the like promises, are the Streams, which, flowing from that river, the Covenant of Grace, make glad the City of God, which is the Church, even when

the waters roar, and the mountains are shaken with the swelling thereof, Ps. 46. 3, 4. That is, whatever changes of government are caused by the fury of a tumultuous multitude, stirred up by Satan and his instruments against the Church and People of God.

3. Consider the presence of God in Christ, with his Church, in their lowest and most afflicted condition, according to Christs promise to them, being taught to observe and to do what he hath commanded, *Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the World, Mat. 28. 20.* This serves to strengthen the Faith of Gods people, concerning the Church, in her lowest and most afflicted estate; that *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved, God will help her, at the looking forth of the morning, Ps. 46. 4.* It is night with the Church, when nations make a Noise, and the Kingdoms are moved; as it is said in the next verse, yet, even then, the Churches Faith in God, as their portion, being quickned and strengthened, they say, *Jehovah of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob, an high refuge for us Selah: ver. 7.* Therefore, that this consideration may the better serve to strengthen our Faith, I shall shew you sundry Representations of Gods presence with his people, in their lowest and most afflicted condition, which the Scripture holdeth forth unto us. Unto *Abraham* it was represented under a double similitude. 1. *Of Fowls coming down upon the Grass, about to be sacrificed, and*
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Abrahams driving them away, Gen. 15. 11: Which represented the *Egyptians*, and all enemies of the Church, which disturb the people of God in their religious duties of God's worship, and that seek to devour the people of God, as Kites or Eagles, &c. devour Carcasses, and Gods presence and readiness to drive them away, 2. *Of a smoaking Furnace, and burning Lamp, verse 17.* The smoaking Furnace, Notes great Afflictions, firey Tryals, which shall befall the *Israel* of God. The burning Lamp, signifieth that God in Christ is with them, at such times, to save them, *Isa 62. 1.* Unto *Moses* it was represented under the appearing of the Angel of God, in a flame of fire out of the midst of a Bush, the bush burned with Fire, and the bush was not Consumed. *Isa. 3, 2.* This *Moses* looked at as a great sight; and so may we. For the bush is the Church of God, which is burned with firey Tryals: But whence is it that it is not Consumed? It is not from the impotency of the fire to burn the Bush; nor from the strength of the bush to resist the Fire, but from the presence of God in Christ, as appears, verse 6. 7. &c. To *Ezekiel* it was represented under the similitude of a Valley, wherein were many Bones, and they were Dry, *Ezek. 27. 2.* The Valley signifieth the low estate of the Church, the many dry Bones denoted, the discouraging apprehensions the people of God have, when they look upon the power of the Enemies, and their own weakness,

with the eye of sense, for so the Lord said, in verse 11. *Behold, they say our bones are Dried, and our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts:* Yet the Lord to quicken their Faith, promiseth a Resurrection to them. Another Resemblance of Gods presence with his Church and People, in the midst of their greatest Afflictions, we have in those three companions of Daniel, who were cast bound into the midst of the Fire, yet the Fire had no power upon their Bodies, not so much as to singe their Hair, or to change their Coats. The reason of it was, because the Son of God was with them; Dan. 3. 25. Unto Zachary another Resemblance hereof was presented; he saw by Night, a Man Riding upon a Red Horse, and he stood among the Myrtle Trees, that were in the bottom, Zach. 1. 8. The Night is the time of Affliction; the bottom is the low condition of the Church, which is likened unto Myrtle Trees, for its sweet savour unto God. And in this low afflicted estate, Christ is with them, riding upon a Red-horse, as ready to fight against those that afflicted his Church, for whom he interceeds and receives gracious answers. Again in Zach. 12. 2, 3. The Lord fore-told that he would make Jerusalem a Cup of Trembling to the Besiegers, who thought they could as easily swallow them up, as one may drink a cup of Wine, and they would do one with as much pleasure as the other: But saith the Lord, the effects of this cup shall be Trembling and

and Astonishment in you. And in verse 3. he saith, he will make Jerusalem a burdensome Stone, to all People that are gathered together against it; they shall be cut in Pieces. Then they will see cause to wish they had never Burdened themselves with it. Thus you see, upon what firm grounds the Faith of Gods people concerning the good purposes to God, towards his Church, in their lowest, and most afflicted condition, may be strengthened and settled.

2. This ground-work being thus laid, build and exercise this hope upon it, in its suitable operation and works.

1. In its purging work : For, he that hath this Hope, purgeth himself, 1 Joh. 3. 3. Then we work with God, when we improve Gods means to Gods end. Gods end, in afflicting his Church, is not to destroy it, but to purge it: So he saith, in Isa 1. 25, 26. *I will turn mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy Dross; and take away all thy Tinn. And I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.* There he compares the afflictions of his Church and People, to the Fire wherein Gold and Silver is cast, which loseth nothing thereby, but its Dross and tinn; but the Metal it self is thereby made more pure and fit for honourable uses, and services. In the 27th chapter, the 8th and 9th verses, the same

is expressed under two other Metaphors : 1. Of an Husband-man, or Vine dresser. *In Measure, and in the Branches, wilt thou debate with it ;* as the Husband-man or Vine-come, doth not stock up the Roots, to destroy the Fruit-trees and Vines, but only Lop them, and prune them, by taking away their Luxuriant, and superfluous Branches, that so they may become more Fruitful.

2. Of stormy Winds. He instanceth in the East-wind, which is hurtful to the Trees and Corn, in those hot Eastern Countries, by blasting them, *Gen. 41. 6.* By its Scorching heat, whence the *Gracians* call it *xavouva*, yet the Lord saith, he will so order it, that no hurt shall redound to his Church and People by it, *but by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be Purged, and this shall be all the Fruit to take away his Sin:* Now, seeing this is Gods end and way ; let all the Churches and people of God, act accordingly, in this time of *Jacobs* troubles, looking up to God in Christ, for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to make this use of his afflicting providences, to be awakned and excited to purge, first their own Hearts, then the Churches, more fully and perfectly. It is no true Policy, but Folly, in such times, to seek and escape from troubles and Dangers, by Compliance with the inventions of Men, and customes of degenerate Churches, and Christians, in the matters of Religion. For that is the ground of Gods controversie with his People,

People, for which he testifieth against them, with so strong and open Rebukes. But account the fear of God to be the head-point, and beginning of Wisdom. Till Men exercise the fear of God, in all their ways, they do not begin to act Wisely. This point of true-wisdom God taught *Joshu*, when he was exceedingly dejected, in *Josha*. 7. 10. to 14. And the Church in Captivity practised accordingly. For they confessed that their sorrows and sufferings were the effects of their Sins; and therefore Resolved to *search and try their ways, and turn again to the Lord*, and then having removed the impediments, their hope was quickned to *lift up their Hearts with their Hands, unto God, in the heavens*, *Lam.* 3. 39, 40, 41. *Shecaniah* also, observing how the Hearts of Gods people were prepared to seek Reconciliation with God, confessed that they had sinned against God, in particular sin discovered to them, and added; *yet now there is hope in Israel, concerning this thing*. And thereupon inferred, *Now therefore let us make a Covenant with our God, &c.* And encouraged *Ezra* to act Vigorously for Reformation, *Ezra* 10. 2, 3, 4. The like course the Church resolved to take, upon encouragement of the like Hope, in *Hos.* 6. 1, 2, 3. This course we must also take, in this Hour of Temptation, if we would have a good issue of these afflicting dispensations, which are upon us

2. Exercise this Hope in its quickening and encouraging Work. For this hope is a lively

hope, 1 Pet. 1. 3. It is very dishonourable to God, and uncomely for Christians to be despondent and discouraged, in such times of Tryal. The time of Jacobs Tryal, should be the time of Jacobs Trusting in God. So did the Church, when the enemies Insulted, in Mich. 7. 8, *Rejoyce not against me, O mine Enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be light unto me.* Two Objections are wont to arise in the minds of Gods People in such times, to weaken their hope in God, you have them both in the answer of Gideon to the Angel, who said unto him, *the Lord is with thee*, Judg. 6. 12, 13, *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all the Miracles which our Fathers told us of?* These are the two Temptations, which if they be not scattered, will hinder the exercise of this Hope. 1. *If God be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* Therefore to arm you, consider that this two, Gods presence with his People, and Calamities incumbent upon them, may well consist together. For Wise and holy ends, God suffers extream Calamities to befall his Churches and People, before he reacheth forth his hands to deliver them. Particularly he thus dispenseth: 1. That he may thereby convince them of the vanity of those Creature-props, whereupon they want to rely too much, and to purge carnal Confidence out of them. This was the great Sin of the People of Israel,

to trust in the shadow of *Egypt*, and to relye upon *Assyria*, though they were fore-warned that *Egypt* would be a broken Reed, which would rather hurt than help them; therefore (saith the Lord) have I cried to her; their strength is to sit still, *Isa* 30. 6, 7. That is, to renounce their creature Dependencies, and to expect salvation from God alone, according to *Moses* his exhortation, in *Exod.* 14. 13. But they continually disobey God herein, till the Lord hath convinced them of their sin and Folly, by their Captivity in *Babylon*, from which no Creature could deliver them. Then, when God by affliction had wrought their hearts to an humble Frame, and to Repentance, they express it, in reference to this Sin, particularly, saying, *Ashur shall not save us, we will not Ride upon Horses, &c. For in thee the Fatherless findeth Mercy, Hos.* 14. 3. The like controversies God had with his Churches and People, at this day, for their trusting too much in the arm of Flesh, in their Secrecy, in the Army, or in their Fleets: and thereupon became Carnally secure, and wanton, and slight, when they had such Props to stay upon, and answerably dejected, and almost discouraged, when they failed them. The Lord awakes and humble his People for it, and cause their Eyes for the future, to be towards him alone. 2. That his People may see him in his Glory, and Glorifie him alone for their Deliverances, he brings them unto a seemingly, forlorn Condi-

tion, and helps to the Eye of Sense. So in *Isa. 33. 9. 10. The Earth mourneth and Languisheth ; Lebanon is ashamed and Withered ; Sharon is like a Wilderness ; and Bashan and Carmel. All things Fail : Now will I Rise, Now will I be Exalted ; (saith the Lord ;) Now will I lift up my self. Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.* 3. That Gods Faithfulness in his promise may be Glorified. For so he hath promised in *Dent. 32. 36. The Lord shall Judge his People, and Repent himself, for his Servants, when he seeth that their Power is gone, &c.* And in *Pf. 12. 5. For the oppression of the Poor, for the sighing of the Needy, now will I arise (saith the Lod) I will set in Salvation, he shall have Breathing.* You see how low they are brought, they are poor and Needy, and Oppressed, so as they dare not make complaints openly, but sigh and groan secretly. This is the time when God promiseth to rise up, and to give Salvation to them.

And, to shew that this is Gods constant way, in performing his promise, the *Psalmist* addeth his *probatum est* to it, in the next verse, *the sayings of Jehovah*, that is, promises, and, in particular, those that are of this import and concernment, are pure sayings, as silver tryed in a subliming furnace of earth, fined seven times ; that is, the Saints have, by constant experience, found the truth and faithfulness of God in performing them. 4. That thus God may raise
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and heighten the esteem of his favours in the hearts of his People, when they are beyond and above their expectation. This effect followed the return of the People of God from Captivity in *Babylon*, *Pf. 126. 1, 2, 3.* *When Jehovah returned the Captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream;* that is, it was so far above our thoughts, that we questioned whether it was true, or no, as *Peter* did, in *Acts 12. 9.* *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joyful shouting.* This did so raise their joy and thanksgiving to God, that it broke forth into shooting. The very Heathens admired and said, *God hath done great things for them.* Much more were themselves affected, and therefore they added, *Jehovah hath done very great things for us, we are joyful.* 5. That, by such dispensations, their Faith and Obedience may be more fully tryed and perfected. It is said of *Christ*, that, *though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered, Heb. 5. 8.* that is, by his sufferings, he had the experimental knowledge of that mediatorly, obedience, which he, as our surety, was to perform; which is noted in *Phil. 2. 8.* So the Churches of *Christ* are brought low, that they may learn experimentally, suffering obedience, which is the highest obedience of Faith. They are brought into a widow-like condition, that, as *she that is a widow indeed, and indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications,*

and prayers, night and day, 1 Tim. 5. 5. so they may be disposed suitable to God's end, in afflicting them, who saith, *I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord, Zeph. 3. 12. 6.* That they be more frequent in prayer: this operation hope had in David, when he was brought so low that he said, *I looked on the right hand, and beheld, and no man acknowledged me, refuge is perished from me, no man seeketh for my soul.* This quickned and intended his fervency in Prayer. *I cryed unto thee, Jehovah, and said, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living, Ps. 142. 4, 5.* Despair in the Creatures help is oftentimes the ground of hope in God for help. For infinite goodness, accompanied with infinite wisdom and power, can never be at a loss, nor can Faith and Hope, which look at them, ever be at a stand. As God knows our souls in adversity, Ps. 31. 7. so we know God best in adversity. God is best seen in the Mount: To the second Objection; *and where be all his Miracles, which our Fathers told us of?* I shall speak briefly. It hath been sometimes that which hath troubled the Saints, That they see not such great things done for the Church in our days, as we read of in former times. But there is no cause for it. For the hand of the Lord is not shortned, nor is the Church lower in in his esteem than formerly. When the Lord had said by his Prophet, *The people which were left*

lost of the sword, found grace in the wilderness, Jerem. 31. 2. the people answered, *Jehovah hath appeared of old*: as if they should say, Truth, he did so in time past; those were good days indeed: but now those days are gone, we must look for no more of them. The Lord replied, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee*, ver. 3. teaching us thereby to improve Experiences, to the strengthening of our Faith for the present, and our Hope, for the future. Experience is a multiplied remembrance of former Favours and Blessings, which will help to multiply our Hope: For *Experience worketh Hope*, Rom. 5. 4. Hope encouraged by Experience, will encourage unto Prayer, Ps. 22. 4. Hence arose that pleading of Believers with God in Prayer, in *Isa. 51. 9. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord awake, as in the ancient days, in the Generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon of the Sea? Art thou not it which hath dried the Sea?* v. 10. And fervent Prayer encreaseth and strengthened this Hope; Thus Christ teacheth us, in the Parable of the Widow importuning the unjust Judge, *Luke 18. 6, 7, 8. Joab never put up a more acceptable Request unto David, than when he interceded for his banished Absalom.* God is much more pleased to be petitioned for his afflicted Church, *Ps. 122. 6.* He is very ready to answer such Prayers with good Re-

may that be retorted upon them, in reference to God and his People, which Zebul replied unto Gaal, in reference to Abimilech, in *Judg. 9. 18. Where is now thy mouth, which said, who is the Lord, that he should serve him? Is not this the People whom thou hast despised?* Only be sure, if you would cleave to God, that you cleave to his Word, and every Truth in it, when it is opposed by a sinful and unbelieving Generation; *Contend for the Faith which was once given to the Saints*, Jude 3. *ἐπαγροίζεσθαι* signifies, not simply to contend, but with all our might, and more, if it were possible. The thing to be contended for is *the Faith*, not a Fancy, but the Truths received with Faith, upon God's Authority in his Word, the least jot and title whereof God values at a higher rate than Heaven and Earth, *Mat. 5. 18.* and the Martyrs of Jesus esteemed it above all worldly things, and above their lives. And so should we. 3. This Faith was *once* delivered once for all. If it be lost, or exchanged for error, there is danger that it will be lost for ever, as we might prove by many examples of Apostates who have been become Infidels and Atheists. 4. This Faith was *delivered*, deposited, committed to our trust, of which a strict Account must be given how we have kept and used it.

There are *three* things which above all others God expects we should keep most carefully and faithfully from being wronged: 1. His own Name,

turns : For he saith, *Ask me of things to come, concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me, Isa. 45. 11.*

3. Exercise this Hope in its strengthening work. In every degree of the Exercise of this Hope there is an answerable Degree of joy : *We rejoyce in Tribulation under the hope of Glory, Rom. 5. 2, 3* and answerable to our joy in God will be our strength in God, *Neh. 8. 10.* Therefore let this Hope strengthen you, 1. *To cleave unto God with purpose of heart, Acts 11, 23.* It is good cleaving to him who will never leave nor forsake his People in their Distress, *Heb. 13. 5, 6.* They that forsake God to cleave to other helpers, will find their Hopes disappointed, when they have most need of Help ; Then God will say, *Where are their Gods, their Rocks, in whom they trusted ? Deut. 32. 37.* And they shall not know what to answer, but be ashamed of that which cannot profit nor deliver : for they are vain. When the People of God are in distress, wicked Men will insult against them, and say, *Where is now their God ? Ps. 115. 2.* But their Answer is ready, *Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleaseth, ver. 3.* They will be ready to say, *Where are your Fastings ? your Prayers ? your Confidence in God ?* The Answer is easy, they are with God in his Book of Remembrance : they are as seed sown in Heaven, whence we shall reap a plentiful crop of mercy in due time, But how easily may

Name, which is put upon us. 2. His Church
3. His Truths contained in Scripture, 2 Tim
1. 14. 5. This *Deposition* is committed to the
Saints in common; not only to Ministers or
Magistrates, but also to all Believers. It is
the *common Faith*, wherein every Believer hath
his interest in common with the rest; as all
Planters and Inhabitants have in the Com
mons that belong to a Town, for which they
will contend with any man that shall wrong
them in that their interest. 6. *Salvation* and
this Faith are joyned, to teach us, to provide
for our Salvation by keeping the Faith. Faith
and Salvation are kept or lost together. 2.
To wait patiently and constantly upon God,
in doing and suffering his Will : For God
sometimes puts a long Date to the performance
of his Promises.

But God's deferring is no empty space, but a
time of fitting his Church, and People, for the
good things promised. Whilst Physick is
working, the time is not lost, though health
be not yet recovered : For, when the sick hu
mour is purged out, then comes health, see *Isa*
30, 18. Only be careful that whilst you wait,
you do not cross your hope by Sinning against
him, upon whom you wait. True waiting is
not a meer staying God's leisure, but a con
tinuing in a gracious inoffensive course, till the
good waited for be attained.

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